NEW SERIAL BY JOAN BARRETT. START TO-DAY.

SHORT STORIES

EDITED BY C. ARTHUR PEARSON (OF PEARSON'S WEEKLY)

No. 436. FOR WEEK ENDING MAY 8TH, 1897. [ONE PENNY.

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NERVINE

SHORT STORIES

No. 436.] [One Penny.

For the Week ending May 8th, 1897.

MY FRIEND MRS. MAWL.

Now this story has really nothing to do with me, but as I was mixed up in it a good deal, I think I might as well tell it. Nobody else is ever likely to, so here it starts:

You know the firm of Mawl, Butler and Co., don't you? Well, Mawl and I were great friends, we were educated together, and both fell in love with the same girl. Maizie Williams was her name, and very fond of her I was, but Mawl had a flourishing business, with offices in London and Paris, and was a tall, handsome fellow to boot—and she became Mrs. Mawl.

I don't blame her. She was passionately fond of gaiety, and my means would not have sufficed.

Mawl was one of those careless, good-natured, easy-going men who made friends everywhere, the very opposite to his partner Butler, who, with his green shifty eyes and red shaggy hair, somehow always reminded me of a fox. But he lived abroad, and rarely came to London, and so I saw little of him.

Mawl and his wife were a most devoted couple, despite the fact of her being a Catholic and he a Protestant. No matter how tired he was when he came home from business, he was always ready to take her to some theatre or gardens, and it was a wonder to me often how she could ceaselessly go the round of gaieties and never tire.

EDITED BY C. Arthur Pearson

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One evening I called at their house and found Mawl by himself. "Where is your wife?" I inquired.

"Don't you know that every so many months she goes into a convent and does penance for her sins?" he answered.

"I never knew that; since when has she done so?"

"Ever since we have been married. She asked me if she might, you know, when we were engaged, because her religion is rather against these dances and things that she goes to, and I couldn't very well refuse, although it is lonely here without her."

I thought the arrangement an odd one, and said:

"How long does she go for, and what does she do?"

"Goodness knows what she does. I never go with her. It is part of her penance to go by herself, and she visits the sick, or nurses in hospitals, or some such idea. It takes her about a month or six weeks sometimes to get through with it all."

"If I were you, Mawl, I'd get your wife to break out of that habit of going into hospitals. She might catch some illness, you know."

"I know, my dear chap, and I will try when she comes home. I expect her home to-morrow. She's at the 'Holy Sisters of the Sacred Heart,' in Paris, now, and I haven't heard from her for over a week, and then she always comes home."

"All right. I'll come in in a day or two, and see her when she has come back. Good-night!" and lighting my pipe, I strolled homeward to my lodgings.

It must have been a week afterwards that I suddenly ran into Mawl as I was going along the Strand. He looked intensely anxious and miserable, and passed by without noticing me; so I laid my hand on his arm and said: "Hullo! old chap, how are you?" He started as if I had been a ghost, then stared at me for a moment, and finally said:

"Have you anything to do?"

"Anything to *do?*" I repeated, surprised. "What do you mean?"

"I mean have you anything to do before Saturday?"

"Well, on Saturday, you know, I start for New York to see my sister married, but I have nothing to do until then. What's up?"

"Come in here," he said, drawing me into a café close by, "and I'll tell you."

We seated ourselves in a dark corner, and I ordered something. While I was speaking to the waiter I noticed Mawl's eyes were fixed upon me all the time in a speculative sort of way. He seemed as if he was trying to test me in some fashion.

"Now then!" I said presently.

"Well, it's like this," replied Mawl, lowering his voice. "My wife's gone!"

I stared at him in utter amazement.

"Yes—I believe I'm right—I got suspicious the night you left me—she had been away a much longer time than usual, and I wired the morning after to the convent to ask if she were still there. I got the answer that she had left more than a month, but sometimes called for letters. Now those were my letters. That was on Friday last. Well, late on Saturday I received a post-card, written in a disguised hand, which said: 'Your wife has been seen here, fetch her home at once—she is in great danger.' Now, I have been nearly mad since Saturday. I *can't* go myself, business is so bad that it would mean ruin if I left it for an hour. I have wired to Butler, but the fool is away as usual—he always is when I want him—and I know nobody I could trust with such a mission except you. Will you go to Paris to-night and find her?"

How could I refuse? I was singularly against acting the amateur private detective against my friend's wife, above all people; despite the fact that I knew his fears were groundless. It was only some religious freak that had caused Maizie to bury herself and her whereabouts in the great city of Paris.

"Why not tell the police?" I hazarded.

He shuddered. "No, I could not. The disgrace of such a thing would kill me. No; you go, for goodness' sake, and find her quietly, but *whatever* you do, don't send for the police unless it is absolutely necessary. I am so afraid she has been stolen or something, perhaps even worse. She is so innocent, and so lonely, that—oh, don't talk of it! I shall go mad if I don't find her!"

After this I decided to go, much as I disliked the undertaking, and next day found me in the gay city, wandering somewhat aimlessly about in search of the Convent of the Holy Sisters.

Down a dirty little back street and surrounded by high, grey stone walls, at last I found it. The Lady Superior knew Maizie well, she said; she frequently came and stayed there; "but never for more than a night or two," she added.

"And how long is it since you have seen her?" I asked.

The Lady Superior raised her hands. "Oh, a long time now," she said, "nearly a month. She left here to go and stay with her friends at Asnières, where she always goes."

I asked for the friends' name and address, but the good lady could tell me neither. She did not think she had ever heard the name.

I wired to Mawl for the information required, and his answer was to the effect that they had no friends living there, and he had no idea what I meant. So that clue was lost.

Next day I called upon Mr. Butler, the partner. He was still away, but expected back next day. I could do nothing, as Mawl had forbidden my going to the police, so I idly wandered about and wished myself well out of the whole business. It was a beautiful day, and having nothing better to do, I wandered into the Tuileries Gardens. The birds were singing and the flowers and trees in full leaf and blossom. In one corner I noticed a crowd of people, so strolling up, I wedged myself between to see what it was. It turned out to be a photographer taking pictures of the people, to be made into slides for the cinematographe. I stood and watched him, and when he had finished, he packed up his apparatus, and said to me: "You've come out well, sir—you were right in the middle all the time."

Next day I called on Butler again. He was very pleased to see me, and insisted on my having a whisky and soda and one of his famous cigars before he would hear a word about my errand. When, however, I told him what I was there for, his face fell.

He had seen nothing of her for nearly a month. She called on him one morning for some money, as she had done before, and gave him to understand that she was going to stay with some friends who lived out at Asnières, but who the friends were, or what was their address, he was unable to tell me.

I left him disheartened. Here was Friday morning, and no news of the missing woman.

I wired to Mawl, although I was sorry to have to do so. Some three hours afterwards I received his reply:

Wife returns home to-night: just had a wire.

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I spent the rest of that day as I had done the previous ones—doing nothing, but I was heartily glad Mawl had got his wife back again, as I was myself beginning to be afraid that perhaps some terrible death had overtaken her in some unknown part of Paris, where she was in the habit of going on her errands of charity. Saturday morning I rose early. As I was at breakfast a telegram was handed to me; it ran thus:

Wife returned safely; many thanks and a pleasant voyage.—Mawl.

That was all. No explanation, no anything. Truly the ways of some men and women are difficult to understand.

* * * * *

It must have been nearly a year after these events, when I was seated in my hotel at Chicago, that I received two newspapers, one dated some two months previous, and one about a fortnight.

The old one contained the following announcement:

Mawl.—On the 26th inst., at Heather Villa, Hampstead, the wife of W. Mawl, of a son.

The second paper read thus:

Mawl.—On the 14th inst., at Hastings, of pneumonia, the beloved wife of W. Mawl, of Hampstead, aged 26.

I felt the tears rise to my eyes. My poor little sweetheart to die such a cruel death and so young, too! and then the thought of the bereaved husband came to me, and I sat down and wrote to him a few poor, ill-expressed words, which but inadequately conveyed to him what I really felt.

* * * * *

I jumped into a cab at Charing Cross and told the man to drive me to my chambers in St. James' Street. Crossing Piccadilly we nearly ran over a man. It was Mawl! but, oh, how changed. His tall figure was wasted and bent, and his black hair plentifully streaked with grey. He looked an old man, though scarcely more than thirty-five. He seemed pleased to see me in a quiet, absent sort of way, and seemed surprised when I told him it was eighteen months since I had been in London. He told me also that he was bankrupt, which fact astonished me, until I learnt that Butler, his partner, had absconded and left enormous debts in Paris which were charged to the firm.

Thinking to draw him out of himself I took him to dine with me, and afterwards we went to the new music hall that had lately been opened in Leicester Square.

The programme was of the usual order of music halls, and nobody took any interest until the theatre was darkened for a display of the cinématographe.

I settled myself in my stall and vaguely wondered what views I should see.

Sure enough—the Tuileries Gardens and myself as the centre figure!

A laugh burst from me at sight of myself with my habitual vacant stare on my face. But the laugh was frozen at its birth, for just behind me, arm in arm and evidently in low converse, walked a man and a woman side by side right across the picture.

They were Mrs. Mawl and Butler the partner!

I heard a gasp beside me, and became conscious that Mawl had staggered to his feet and was blindly making his way out of the theatre. I was obliged to follow him although it was difficult work, as the place was in darkness. Silently we got into a cab, and he told the man to drive to his house.

"I want you to see the boy," he said briefly, when I looked at him in some surprise.

Silently he opened the house door, and lighting a small lamp led the way upstairs.

In a cot in the nursery lay all that belonged to him of his erring but dead wife.

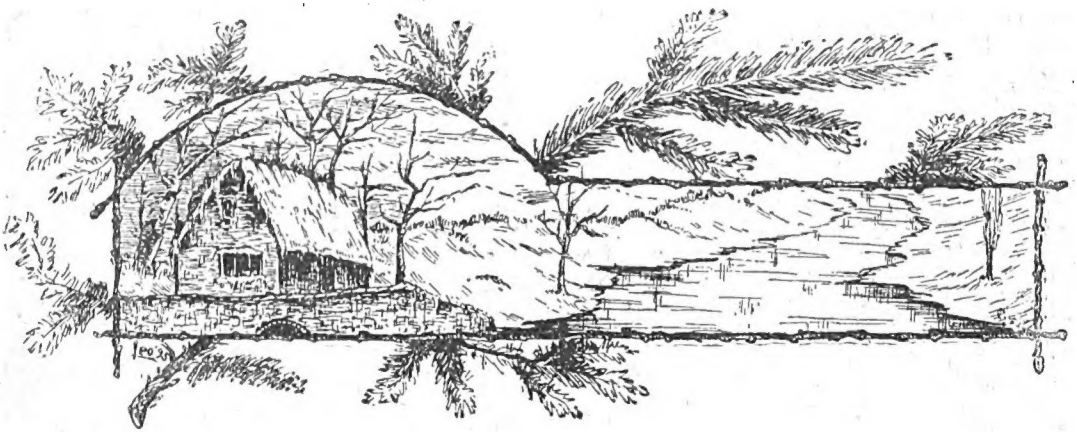
He was a chubby, fat boy, slumbering happily, with the finest head of red hair I have ever seen on any child.

"Poor little brat," I heard Mawl say. "There is no one to look after you—except you," turning to me. "You will look after him, won't you?"

I silently clasped his hand, and we then went out.

That night he shot himself.

Erroll Stanhope.



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TWO SOLDIERS' WIVES

A Stirring Story of the "Terrible Year."

THIS extraordinary episode took place shortly after Bourbaki's defeat in the Eastern provinces. His decimated and exhausted army had, after a terrible campaign, taken refuge in Switzerland, the brevity of the struggle alone saving some hundred thousand men from certain death. Hunger, the fearfully cold weather, and the forced marches through the snow-covered mountain paths, had more particularly affected the *francs-tireurs*, thrown out as forlorn hopes, without tents or provisions, with the vanguard when it was advancing towards Belfort, or with the rear when it retreated in the direction of the Jura Mountains.

Our little troop—which, on the 1st of January, numbered twelve hundred men—had dwindled down to two-and-twenty emaciated, tattered scarecrows by the time we reached the Swiss territory. Here, at last, were rest and peace, and, greeted by the inhabitants with kindly sympathy, we received every care and attention.

Life seemed to spring afresh in us, and even those who before the war had been rich and happy, declared that creature comforts never seemed so precious till then. Just fancy, we ate every day and slept every night!

War, however, was still raging in the eastern district of France, which by some oversight had not been included in the armistice. Besançon continued to present a bold front to the enemy, who retaliated by devastating the Franche-Comté. Sometimes, indeed, we would hear that the Germans were close to the frontier, and we saw the Swiss troops hurriedly start off to keep a watchful cordon between them and us.

At last we grew weary at heart; and, as our health and strength returned, we longed to renew the struggle. It gave us a feeling of shame and irritation to know that yonder, not more than nine miles from us, our unhappy country was overrun by the Prussians, who roamed about as insolent conquerors, while we were, at the same time, protected and rendered helpless by our captivity.

One day, our captain called five or six of us aside, and spoke long and angrily about it. He was a fine fellow, formerly a non-commissioned officer in the Zouaves; he was a tall, wiry kind of man, hard as nails, and during the whole of the campaign had cut out plenty of work for the Germans.

He was eating his heart out at this inactivity, and could not resign himself to the idea that he was a prisoner, and unable to do anything more.

"Good Heavens!" he said to us, "can you remain quiet when you hear that the Uhlans are only two hours' march from here? Does not your blood boil at the thought of those wretches stalking about like masters in our mountains, when five thoroughly determined men could easily kill off a file every day? As for me, I cannot rest—I must go there."

"But, Captain, how can we get there?" we said.

"How?" he replied. "Oh, that's easy enough. We have often got out of the woods more closely guarded than these Swiss forests. The day you choose to go into France I'll manage to get you there—never fear."

"Of course," we rejoined, "we might pass; but what could we do in France without arms?"

"Without arms!" he retorted; "we shall find plenty over there."

"You forget the treaty," objected another. "We should run the risk of bringing trouble on the Swiss if Manteuffel hears they have let prisoners recross the frontier."

"Come, come," said the Captain, "all these are poor reasons. I want to go and kill some Prussians, that's all I know. You do not want to; very well—only say so at once. I can go alone; I don't need anybody."

We protested; but as it was impossible to make the Captain change his mind, it ended by our promising to accompany him. We were too much attached to him to abandon him, for he never failed us in our need; so the expedition was decided upon.

The Captain had a plan that he had been cogitating for some time past. He got a friendly farmer to lend him a cart and five peasants' costumes. Two of us were then stowed away in a couple of chests in the vehicle, straw was thrown over us, and the whole laden with Gruyère cheeses which were supposed to go to be sold in France. The Captain, dressed up as a carter, told the sentinels that he was taking a couple of friends with him to protect his goods in case of robbers, and there seemed nothing out of the way in this precaution.

A Swiss officer appeared to cast a knowing look at the cart, but that was merely to impress his men. In reality, neither the officer nor the soldiers had any suspicion of the truth.

"Gee-up," cried the Captain, cracking his whip, and our three men calmly smoked their pipes and chatted together in the country dialect. Meanwhile I was half smothered in my box.

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"Gee-up," again cried the Captain, as the cheese-cart entered French territory.

The Prussians' lines were very badly kept, the enemy relying on the watchfulness of the Swiss. The Prussian sergeant spoke Northern German, our Captain the German dialect of the Swiss cantons, so they did not understand each other. The sergeant, however, pretended to understand, and allowed us to pass on. At last, as night fell, after seven hours of this strange journeying, we reached a small, half-ruined village in the Jura.

What was going to become of us? The Captain's whip was our only weapon, our clothes the peasants' smocks, and our sole food Gruyère cheese. We were rich in ammunition, for we had concealed some packets of cartridges in the middle of the big cheese, and had about a thousand, that is, two hundred shots apiece. But we required guns.

Luckily the Captain was both ingenious and daring, and his plans were well laid. While three of our party remained hidden in a cellar of the village, he and the other man went on in the direction of Besançon. The town, it was true, was invested; but it is an easy matter to enter a city situated in a mountainous country, by following the plateaux till within about fifteen miles of the walls, and then going on foot through the paths and ravines.

At Ormans, in the midst of the Prussian lines, they abandoned the cart, and in the night gained the heights above the river Doubs. The next morning they reached Besançon. There they found plenty of arms, and the commanding officer, General Roland, highly approving the Captain's daring adventure, gave him six rifles and uniforms and wished him good luck.

The Captain also found there his wife, for she had made the previous campaign with us, and had only been prevented following Bourbaki's retreat by an acute attack of illness. Now she had completely recovered her strength, and, notwithstanding the wretchedly cold weather and the numberless privations that were to be expected, she insisted on leaving the town with her husband. He was obliged to consent, and, accompanied by his wife and our comrade, started off at once. The return journey was most hazardous; they had to travel by night, in order to avoid meeting anyone, for the possession of six rifles would have aroused suspicion. After an absence of eight days the Captain and his two companions rejoined us, and our campaign began in earnest.

The very first night of his return, the Captain began proceedings. Under pretence of reconnoitring the country, he went down to the high road. I must mention that the village, which served as our fortress, consisted of a small cluster of poor, ill-built houses that had long been abandoned. They were situated on the summit of a deep plateau, surrounded by thick woods; the inhabitants were in the habit of cutting the wood and sliding it in large blocks down the abrupt slopes, called *coulées*, that run down to the plain, where it was placed in heaps, and twice a year sold to the contractors. Two huts, or, rather, small inns on the highway, marked the spot where the sales took place, and it was to this place that the Captain had gone down by one of the *coulées*.

We were on the look-out at the top of the ravine, and he had been absent about half an-hour, when we were startled by the report of a gun. The Captain had left strict orders that we were not to move unless we heard his bugle, so, notwithstanding our cruel state of anxiety, we felt obliged to wait motionless, with our rifles ready. A mortal hour passed, but not another sound reached us, not even a rustle in the copse. The Captain's wife grew terribly impatient; what could he be doing? Why did he not summon us? Was that an enemy's shot? Had it wounded or killed our chief, her husband?

These and many other were the questions we exchanged. We did not know what to think. As for me, I thought that either he must be dead, or his expedition prospering. I was only curious and anxious to know what he had done. Suddenly, a sharp, ringing blast resounded; but, to our intense surprise, instead of rising from below, it came from the village behind us. What could this mean? We all had the same idea. Evidently the Captain had been killed, and the Prussians were sounding his bugle to draw us into a trap. We, therefore, cautiously wended our way towards the houses, step by step, finger on trigger, hiding in the brushwood as we advanced.

The Captain's wife, however, in spite of our entreaties, dashed forward into the open, fixing the bayonet on her gun, for she fancied she would have to revenge her husband's death. We lost sight of her at the very moment when a second blast burst forth, and a few minutes later we heard her call out:

"Come on, come on; he is alive—it is he!"

We hurried forward, and at the entry of the village were met by the Captain, smoking his pipe: but, strange to say, he was now on horseback.

"Well," he said, "you see something can be done here. I am mounted now; I shot a Uhlan and took possession of his horse. There was a small troop of them at the inn, probably guarding the high road, but they were feasting and drinking freely. The sound of their voices guided me; the sentry at the door had not even time to see me before I made daylight through him, and, jumping on his horse, I dashed off, followed by eight or ten in hot pursuit. However, I took some cross-paths, and here I am, you see, only a bit scratched and torn. Now, lads, we must look out; those fellows won't rest till they find us, and we must greet them with bullets; each man to his post."

One man was placed as an advanced sentinel at some distance from the village, I was put at the entry of the street, the two others and the Captain and his wife occupying the centre of the village, near the church, the little belfry serving as watch-tower and fortress.

We had not long taken up our positions when we heard a shot, followed by another, then two, then three reports. The first was evidently from a chassepot; it could easily be recognised by the sharp crack, like that of a whip. The three others proceeded from the cavalry rifles used by the Uhlans.

The Captain was furious; he had given strict orders to the advance-post to allow the enemy to pass, and only to follow them if they came on in the direction of the village, and to rejoin me when the little troop should be closed in between the houses. Then we should have got them between two fires, and not one would have escaped.

"The devil take Piédelot," said the Captain; "the idiot has put them on the alert, and they won't dare to come on. Besides, I am sure he has managed to get hit, for we don't hear him call, nor return their shots. He has only got his deserts; he ought to have obeyed orders." Then, after a moment's pause, he muttered in his beard. "Poor fellow, he is so plucky, and shoots so well."

The Captain's conjecture proved true. We waited till evening, but no Uhlans put in an appearance. They had evidently withdrawn after the first attack.

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Unfortunately, we did not see anything of Piédelot—was he a prisoner, or dead? When it was dark, the Captain proposed to go and reconnoitre, and three of us started. At the place where the sentry had been posted we found blood, a broken gun, and the ground very trampled, showing that there had been a desperate struggle; but, although we searched the brushwood around, we could find neither wounded nor dead. We returned at midnight, without any news of the unhappy comrade.

"It is very strange," growled the Captain. "They must have killed him and hid him in the underbrush. It is impossible that he should have escaped. He would have called for help. I cannot make it out."

As he was speaking, a great red glare rose up in the direction of the inn on the high-road, and lit up the sky.

"Blackguardly cowards!" he screamed; "I'll wager that to revenge themselves they have set fire to the sale-houses. And then they will sneak off; one man killed and two houses burnt satisfies them. But we won't let them off so cheap. Come, my men, we will force them to leave their bonfire, and fight."

"If only we could rescue Piédelot at the same time, what luck it would be," said one of the men.

We started off, all five of us, full of anger and hope. In twenty minutes we had slidden down the *coulée*, and were within a hundred yards of the inn. The fire was at the back of the house, and the lurid glare over the roof was alone visible. We were advancing slowly, fearful lest we should fall into a trap, when we heard Piédelot's well-known voice. It sounded strange, hoarse, and loud, stifled and, at the same time sharp, as if he were screaming with all his might, while his mouth was stuffed full of rags! He seemed to be groaning and wheezing out the words, "Help! help!".

We cast prudence to the winds, and in two bounds were behind the inn. An appaling sight met our gaze.

Piédelot was being roasted alive! Fastened to the centre of one of the piles of wood, collected there by the foresters, he writhed in agony, while the flames licked him with their sharp tongues. To knock down the pile, scatter the firebrands, and cut his bonds, was but the work of a moment.

Poor fellow, what a condition he was in! His left arm had been broken, and he looked as if he had been beaten and thrashed all over. his whole body was so swollen, so black, so covered with blood.

Poor, poor Piédelot! How we longed to avenge him. How we thirsted for the blood of those villainous Prussians. But they had disappeared, leaving only their crime behind them. Meanwhile, the Captain's wife did her best to dress his wounds. After a few minutes he recovered consciousness.

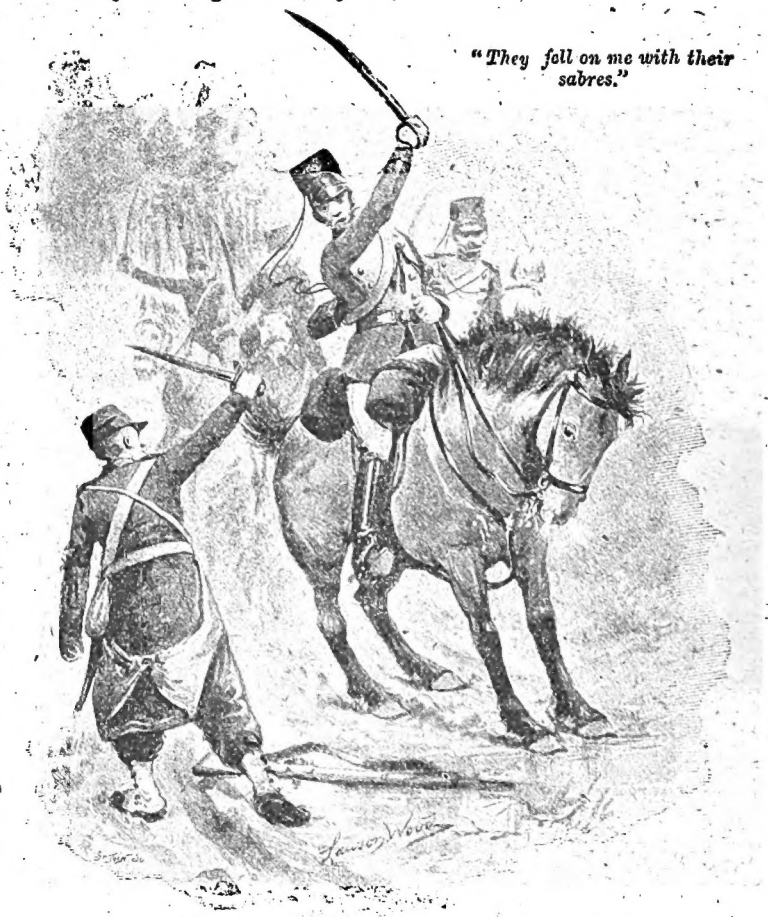
"Ah, Captain, is it you?" he murmured, and then he burst out: "Ah, the blackguards, the wretches. Twenty of them came to surprise us!"

"Twenty?" said the Captain.

"Yes; a whole gang of them! That is why I disobeyed orders, Captain, and fired on them. They would have killed you all, so I preferred stopping them. That frightened them, and they did not dare advance any further, they are such cowards. Four of them fired at me twenty yards, as if at a target; then they fell on me with their sabres. My arm was broken, and I could only use my bayonet with one hand."

"But why did you not call for help?"

"I took care not to. You would have come, and would not have been able to defend me nor yourselves—five against twenty."



"They fell on me with their sabres."

"You know very well," replied the Captain, "we should not have allowed you to be taken prisoner."

"I preferred that only one should be killed. I did not want to draw you there; it would have been madness."

"Well, well, we won't talk of that any more. Do you feel any easier, now?"

"No," said poor Piédelot, "I am choking. I know I can't live. The wretches tied me to a tree, and beat me, and wrung my broken arm till I fainted. But I did not scream; I would have bitten off my tongue sooner than cry out before them. Now, with you round me, I can say how I suffer; I can cry, and it does me good. Thank you, my dear friends, thank you."

"Poor Piédelot, we will avenge you."

"Oh, yes, I am quite willing you should do that. There is a woman among them—the wife of the fellow the Captain killed yesterday. She is dressed like an

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Uhlan, and she is the most cruel of them all. It was she who proposed roasting me, and she herself set fire to the wood. Oh, the brute—what pain—oh, my back, my arm!"

He fell down, gasping and writhing in a terrible agony. The Captain's wife wiped the perspiration from his brow; we cried like children with rage and despair.

I cannot relate the end. He died in about half-an-hour. But before he expired, he told us in which direction the Prussians had gone. We hurriedly buried him, and dashed away in furious pursuit of them.

"We will throw ourselves into the middle of the Prussian army, if it is necessary," said the Captain, "but we will avenge Piédelot. Let us swear to die sooner than let those fellows escape. If I am killed these are my orders—all prisoners taken, not excepting the woman, are to be shot on the spot."

"Not the woman," said the Captain's wife; "if you survive you will never shoot a woman, I know. But if you die in this attempt I will fight her single-handed, and kill her myself. If she kills me you may do what you like with her."

"We will roast her—tear her to pieces!" the others exclaimed. "Piédelot shall be avenged! Eye for eye, tooth for tooth!"

And with this we set off.

The next morning we fell unawares on an outpost of Uhlans, some twelve miles distant. Surprised by our sudden attack, they were unable to get to their horses or even to defend themselves, and, in a few minutes, we made all five prisoners The Captain examined them. From their answers we felt sure these were our fellows, and when we discovered one of them was a woman—the female torturer who martyred our comrade—we were savagely delighted. The four men were at once dispatched.

Then we discussed what should be the woman's fate. I must confess that we all wanted to shoot her, for hatred and thirst for revenge had deadened all pity in our hearts. We forgot we were going to kill a woman. It was a woman—the Captain's wife—who recalled us to our senses, and, by her advice, it was decided to keep the Uhlan's wife a prisoner.

Poor woman, she little guessed how cruelly she was to be punished for her pity.

The following day we learnt that the armistice was extended to the eastern district, and that we were therefore obliged to put an end to our little campaign. Two of our men, who belonged to that part of the country, went back to their homes, and only four remained, the the Captain, his wife, and two men. We came from Besançon, which, notwithstanding the armistice, was still beseiged.

"Let us remain here," said the Captain; "I cannot believe that the war will end like this. There are still brave men in France, thank Heaven, and it will soon be spring. The armistice is but a trap laid for the Prussians; in the meantime, another army will be got together, and some fine day we shall fall on the enemy. Then we shall be ready, and we have hostages; let us remain here." So we took up our winter quarters. The weather was terribly cold, and we hardly went out of doors.

Someone was always obliged to mount guard over the Uhlan's wife. She was very gloomy, and hardly spoke, except to lament her husband, whom our Captain had killed. She always cast angry glances at him, and we saw the thirst for vengeance that tortured her. It seemed to us a just punishment for the hideous tortures she had inflicted on Piédelot. Impotent revenge is a terrible grief.

Alas! we, who had known how to avenge our comrade, ought to have realised that this woman would know how to avenge her husband, and we ought to have been on our guard. It is true that at night one of us watched her, and at first the prisoner was bound by a long cord to an old oak bench fastened into the wall. But, little by little, notwithstanding her silent hatred, as she had never tried to escape, our vigilance relaxed, and she was allowed to lie down without being tied. There was nothing to fear, she was at the further end of the room, a man mounted guard at the door, and between her and the sentry the Captain's wife and the two other men slept. Besides she was unarmed and alone against four, it really seemed as if there could be no danger.

One night, while we slept, the Captain being on guard and the woman quietly crouched in her corner, seeming calmer than usual—indeed, she had that day smiled for the first time since her captivity—we were suddenly awakened by a terrific scream.

We jumped up, and, groping about, stumbled over a couple of bodies that were rolling and struggling desperately on the ground. It was the Captain and the Uhlan's wife. We threw ourselves on them, and the succeeded in parting them. The woman was laughing horribly, while the Captain seemed to be gasping. All this took place in the dark. Two of us held the prisoner down. At last we got a light, and then we saw, to our horror, the Captain lying in a pool of blood, with an enormous gash in his throat. His sword-bayonet had been plucked from his gun and stuck in the throat. A few minutes later, without having been able to utter a word, he died.

His wife did not shed a tear; she seemed choked, and, looking at the woman with a calm ferocity that was appalling, she stammered out:

"This woman belongs to me. You swore a week ago to let me kill her in my own way if she killed my husband; you must keep your word. Fasten her firmly in the fireplace, and stand her up at the back of the hearth, then you may go where you like, far away. I will take my own revenge. Leave the Captain's body. We will stay here, we three—he, she, and I."

We silently obeyed her and went away. She promised to write to us at Geneva, whither we were going.

Two days later I received the following letter, dated the day after our departure, and written from the old inn on the high road:

My Dear Friend,—I write to you, according to my promise. I am at the present moment at the inn, where I have just handed over my prisoner to a Prussian officer.

I must tell that the poor woman has left two little children behind her in Germany. She, too, had followed her husband, to whom she was deeply attached, unwilling to let him expose himself alone to the chances of war. She had left the children with their grandfather.

I have known this since yesterday, and this knowledge has changed my thoughts of vengeance to more humane ones. While I was insulting this woman, foretelling her the torments I was about to inflict on her, recalling to her poor Piédelot's fate, and preparing the same torturing death for her, she gazed coldly at me, and said:

"What have you to reproach me with, Frenchwoman? You think you are doing right in avenging your husband, do you not?"

"Certainly," I replied.

"Well, in killing him, I did what you are going to do in burning me. I avenged my husband, whom your husband killed."

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"Then," I retorted, "as you approve of vengeance, prepare to submit to it."

"I do not fear it," she answered.

And, in truth she did not seem to lose courage. Her countenance was serene, and she watched without a tremour while I piled up the wood and dry leaves, and feverishly poured powder from the cartridges to hasten the fire. For one moment I hesitated. But the Captain lay there, ghastly and bloody, looking at me with wide open, glassy eyes. I kissed his pale lips and returned to my work.

Raising my head unexpectedly, I saw that the woman was weeping. I was astonished.

"Oh, you are frightened," I said.

"No," she answered; "but when I saw you kiss your husband, I thought of mine, and all those I love."

She sobbed aloud; then she stopped abruptly, and said, in a faltering, almost inaudible voice:

"Have you any children?"

I quivered all over, for I well understood by her question that this poor woman was a mother. She asked me to look in a pocket-book that was in her breast-pocket. There were two photographs of little children, a boy and a girl, with the good, gentle little chubby faces of German children. There were, also, two fair curls and a letter written in big, awkward letters, beginning with the German word *Mütterchen*.

I could not restrain my tears. I unfastened her bonds, and, without daring to cast a look at my poor dead husband left there unavenged, I came down with her to this inn. She is free. I have just parted from her, and she cried as she bade me good-bye. I am now returning to my poor husband, to my dead love. Come as soon as possible, and fetch our two bodies. . . .

I started off in all haste. When I reached the village, I found a Prussian patrol guarding the little house. I inquired what had taken place, and was told that a captain of *francs-tireurs* and his wife lay dead there. I

I inquired what had taken place.

gave their names, proved that I knew them, and asked to be allowed to bury them.

"Some one has already undertaken their burial," was the reply; "but you may go in if you choose, as you knew them. You can settle with their friend about the funeral."

I went in. The Captain and his wife lay on a bed side by side, covered with a sheet. I raised it gently, and saw that the wife had inflicted on herself the same wound that had killed her husband.

By the bedside, watching and weeping, was the person who had been mentioned to me as their friend.

It was the Uhlan's wife. H. P. B.

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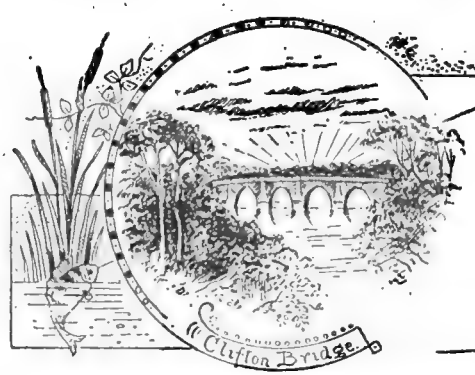

SKIPPER SIM.

Simson was only a middle-aged City clerk, of no particular attractions or accomplishments. He had passed his entire life amid the most humdrum surroundings, but the man's soul rose above them, and he lived a second life in the sphere of his own imagination.

This imagination of Simson's was only equalled by his ardent patriotism. He simply revelled in day-dreams, and was for ever picturing himself in all sorts of heroic attitudes and situations, invariably resulting in the advantage of his country.

He did not look the part of an ideal hero. In person he was short and thick, not to say stumpy; but under his eminently respectable waistcoat beat a heart of no ordinary dimensions, and his round face, fringed with its mutton-chop whiskers, though hardly of heroic mould, was of unusual kindliness.

Simson's life had been singularly uneventful, and the opportunity to distinguish himself, to make his name a synonym for conspicuous bravery, had never arrived. He had attempted to stop a runaway horse, be it admitted at peril of his life, but the playful animal swerved and butted Sim into a miniature lake of rich mud which the road-sweepers had considerately left. The only result was that Sim was severely reprimanded for his late arrival at the office.

On another occasion he beheld a stalwart specimen of the British working man belabouring his better-half at the road side. Simson's blood boiled; he dashed to the rescue, but while pluckily tackling the man, he felt himself assailed in the rear, and as he scorned to hit a woman, received a number of unmerited wounds at the hands of the very lady he had attempted to assist, and who thus indignantly repudiated his interference with "'er old man."

Sim bore the marks of the fray for weeks, but preserved a troubled silence when chaffed on the subject, for, alas, his wounds were not in front.

Fate, and the conversation of young Travers, who passed most of his spare time in a small boat, sailing over the broad reaches of the lower Thames, at length proved too much for Sim.

His long-looked-for opportunity would not come, so he decided to make one, and, with the determination which marks the great man, uprooted himself from the "digs" which he had occupied for fifteen years, and, in tow of young Travers, set out for a semi-marine watering-place within an hour's rail of the office.

As he himself said: "Was not the sea an Englishman's birthright? Was not every Briton a sailor born? And, if young Travers could sail a boat, why not he—Simson?"

Our hero, it must be admitted, did not make a very promising *début* as a British seafaring man. On the first Saturday afternoon he went afloat there was a brisk breeze blowing. Sim was adjured by his companions to "get out of the light before he hurt himself."

Sim attempted to expostulate, but his voice quavered, and he finally subsided into the scuppers, where he came to the conclusion that life was not worth living even for a Briton. Towards evening the breeze died away, and the little craft stole peacefully over the water, unconscious of her former vagaries.

Simson's spirits returned, and he even informed his companions in stirring song that "many a stormy wind should blow 'ere Jack came home again!" Sim's christian-name was Joshua, but that is a digression.

The rest of the boat's crew, of whom Travers was one, welcomed the change in their companion. They cheered him on by voice and gesture, and even pressed stimulant on him, as they said, to avoid the consequences of his former indisposition. Simson graciously accepted their offer, and his mood passed from the despairing to the hilarious.

On returning to the club-house he was hailed as the hero of the evening; his health was frequently drunk, and he returned thanks as often with increasing cordiality, till at length a certain sense of weakness in the knees precluded his rising any more. It was then determined to escort him to his new diggings, and accordingly, throned in a club arm-chair and draped in a billiard table-cover, he was borne forth, informing the world at large that "he was a pirate king, ha! ha!"

From time to time after this the faint echo of his exploits reached the office. Occasionally he himself turned up on the Monday, his honest face bronzed with the wind and sun of his Sunday cruise, bearing a little memento in the shape of a battered hand or a crushed finger-nail; for if ever a man had the faculty of damaging himself without provocation, that man was Sim. If the wind rose in the night, and the morning discovered some unfortunate craft parted from her moorings, and stranded high and dry, Sim had moored her. If the club were cruising, and a black squall swept down and left some vessel capsized or dismasted, the portly form of Sim might be descried struggling furiously to remedy the mishap. The times the man went overboard were without number, and regularly every Sunday the club front was thronged with loungers waiting to see him take his weekly header.

He would go on board in a semi-piratical garb, his good-natured face struggling between a desire to grin, and a determination not to appear ridiculous for once, and the effect was heightened by a red cotton nightcap which crowned his bald head.

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His craft was a half-decked boat of about two tons, named the *Briton's Pride*, and climbing into her with a fearful loss of dignity, he would proceed clumsily and laboriously to overhaul his gear before setting sail.

Then come several loud words of command, and the mainsail of the *Briton's Pride* soars majestically aloft, but not for long. A smart crack, a laugh this time from the loungers, and the folds of the fallen mainsail are violently agitated over the struggling skipper, who invariably managed to be under anything that fell.

Presently a prolonged shout of laughter from club-house and pier tells that Sim, with his habitual ill-luck, has missed his footing and toppled overboard, and the grinning lad, who acts as first-mate, is seen making prods with a boat-hook at his commander, who flounders helplessly alongside.

But in spite of duckings and bruised fingers, Sim was never known to turn back, but always managed to get afloat, and stay there in weather which drove many of the younger men to the comforts of the billiard-room. As the summer wore on, his cruising mania became more pronounced, and in proportion to his progress, he became more ambitious. Great was the astonishment at the club one Saturday evening when the squat form of the *Briton's Pride* was no longer to be seen at her moorings.

For twenty-four hours she was absent, and the club-men were seriously thinking of chartering a tug for a Simson's relief expedition when the familiar craft was discerned returning in the shade of night. Nothing could equal the pride of her owner who had managed to cram enough adventure into his cruise to furnish several Arctic expeditions.

From that day he hesitated no longer, and many a perilous voyage did he make to far-distant Whitstable with its leagues of mud; Herne Bay knew him, and the watches of the Foreland had seen his sail in the darkness of the night; and, oh! the pride of the man! The tales he told, and the vivid anecdotes that went the round of the office, when a solid ink-bottle stood for the Nore light, and the day-book represented the Swatch Channel, mistrusted of mariners.

Daily Sim grew more marine in flavour, persisted in wearing salt-stained serge in the City, and asked the young lady behind the bar for salt junk in his mid-day sandwich; well did his subordinates know that bellow of "All hands on deck!" for it meant that their leisure was finished and their skipper had his weather eye lifting.

Yet the cup of his happiness was not full. The elderly mariner with whom Sim lodged had spent many years in the sea-borne coal-trade, and many adventures had befallen him, so many that Sim never came to the end of them or heard the same story twice.

Did he attempt to tell of that nasty sea he encountered off the Chapman Head, straightway the ancient would plunge into a tale of some terrible hurricane which had burst on him in Yarmouth Roads "seven year ago come Christmas," and Sim could not choose but hear the yarn; but these periods of enforced attention only strengthened Sim's determination to do and dare himself, and this grew to a conviction which nothing could shake.

So the summer wore on, the autumn waned, and the butterfly yachts were dismantled one by one, and laid on the mud or towed to some quiet creek for the winter. But Simson could not tear himself from his favourite pursuit, and, in spite of warnings, continued his week-end cruises in fair weather or foul.

One Sunday morning he and young Travers put to sea in the *Briton's Pride*, taking with them an ample lunch, fishing-tackle, and Sim's lifebuoy.

The weather was fair at starting, but at mid-day a black east wind sprung up, clouding the sky with heavy mirk, and in half-an-hour the whole face of nature was changed, and the white horses were being driven sullenly against the strong tide, while along the shore the sea-birds croaked their dismal note of warning.

The dusk shut down, the Nore light threw its lurid gleam ever and anon across the troubled water, but there were no signs of Skipper Sim or the *Briton's Pride*. As yet, the club-men felt no particular anxiety at his prolonged absence, as there were many creeks and inlets along the coast where a small craft could find shelter if caught in a sudden gale, but a spirit of restlessness was abroad in the club, which prompted the most composed of members to tap at the barometer, and wander aimlessly to and from the windows overlooking the sea.

One sallow youth commenced a joke at the expense of the absent skipper, and was completely crushed by the fierceness with which his attempt was repressed. Old Scales started on one of his long-winded yarns of the days when he was "first luff" of H.M.S. *Rocket*, and at the end of a few minutes was astonished to find himself absolutely without an audience.

A door banged angrily, and a gust of damp wind swept through the smoke-laden room, a heavy footstep fell on the stair, and every member started to his feet expecting and fearing he knew not what. Into the room there lurched a smacksman in streaming oilskins, half supporting, half carrying a young man in the last stage of exhaustion, and this was the spruce and self-possessed Travers—this pale and bedraggled object, open-eyed with horror and gasping for breath.

A dozen hands helped him into a chair, and he sat helpless, the salt water streaming from his shivering limbs and forming a pool on the oilcloth. The men crowded round, anxiously questioning, but the lad could not answer till they forced brandy between his chattering teeth. "What had happened?"—"Where was old Sim?"

Travers groaned, and hid his face in his hands. "Oh, Heavens!" he sobbed, "I don't know; I'm afraid he's gone—he saved me!" and subsided into feeble crying.

There was an instant hush, an incredulous, nervous glance from one to another, then the questions broke out afresh, and the smacksman, who stood stolidly by, was the recipient of many—"Where had he found this gentleman?"—"What did he know of this?" There was a babel of voices, and each keen with anxiety; then the sonorous tones of Scales demanding silence.

The smacksman, sou'-wester in hand, passed a blackened, sinewy hand across his bushy beard, still glistening with the drops of spray, and in a gruff voice told what he knew.

"I was a-lyin' off the bank, waitin' for the tide. It had come over very dirty, and a strong squall was just a-passin', when I heerd a voice somewheres not fifty yards away. I sings out and heerd him again. 'Help!' he says; 'there's a yacht sunk and a man drownin'. Send a boat!' 'All right,' I says; 'whereaway?' But I couldn't rightly catch what he said; his voice was feeble and chokin'. Me and my mate launches the boat and tumbles in. Just then we hears the chap sing out again: 'Help! There's a man drownin' astern of you!'

"We made for him first, but when we got to where we judged the voice came from, we couldn't see nowt—he'd

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gone sure! so after a bit we pulls astern of the smack and finds this young chap in a life-belt, he axed us to fetch him here." With a shuffle of heavy boots and a sad shake of the head the fisherman finished. "Good Heavens! it can't be!" broke from the crowd. "Let's go and look for him!" But Travers looked up. "It's no use, you fellows," he said, shaking his head wearily: "we searched well before we came ashore. The poor chap had on sea-boots and oilskins, and made me take the life-belt while he swam for help, it was the only chance for me!"

They fetched dry clothes and blankets, and propped the lad up before the fire. He went on to tell in choking tones what every man dreaded to hear; how they had been caught in the gale off the Mouse Light.

For hours they had tried to beat back, with the boat half full of ice-cold water, and their blood nearly frozen in their veins. Simson had steered, while Travers handled the jib-sheets and tried to bale the water out, but the lad got paralysed with the cold, and his pluck failed him.

Again and again he gave up with the icy clutch of death on his heart, but each time the elder man cheered him up with voice and example. So they sailed on in the gathering darkness, old Sim doing the work of six men with a smile on his face, while Travers only begged that they might give up and get it over, and he did not spare himself in his recital.

"The cold got to my very bones, and how Sim suffered I can't tell you, for he forced on me every drop of the whisky, said he did not feel the cold, and, greedy brute that I was, I took it. At last we shipped a green sea, then another before we could bale, and the boat sank without rising to a third. I went down with her, and oh! the cold of that water. I didn't feel like struggling much, but Sim got me by the collar and put the life-belt over my head. He said he could see lots of smacks' lights, and they'd be sure to pick us up; but we were drifting further out to sea, out to certain death, when we passed a smack near—it was the last one.

"Sim told me to stick to the life-belt and keep up a good heart, while he started to fetch help. He gripped my hand, poor old boy, before he left me, for we both knew it was touch-and-go! I heard him hail the smack twice, his voice was feeble and the tide terribly strong, but they heard and answered him. Again I heard him clearly: 'It's all right, Travers!' then 'Good-bye!'"

J. R. Bagshawe.

Mrs. Smith's Jewels.

I was seated in my rooms one day in mid June, when Sergeant Drew, of the Scotland Yard Police, entered. I was not at all surprised, as we were on very friendly terms, and scarcely a week passed without my seeing him. On that particular day he seemed so full of importance that he almost forgot to shake hands.

"What's up?" I said, when the usual formula concerning the weather had been gone through, with little interest on either side, it must be confessed.

"Oh, a very interesting case has come under my notice, that is all," he explained, with dignified and pompous condescension.

I knew that he expected me to ask him about it, and I performed this duty with a langour fully justified by the heat. It needed no more to set him off, and he related his tale at an unmerciful length. After the first few sentences, I found it sufficiently interesting to keep me awake, which is saying a good deal.

"This morning," he began, "at about ten minutes to ten, a man came into the office in great terror. He said that he wanted police protection. I examined him carefully—you must allow that I am no bad judge of character—and I must confess that he impressed me favourably. He was between thirty-five and forty years old, and in build was slight. His complexion was freckled, and his straw-coloured hair hung limply about a face pale with terror. From his dress I judged him to be American, and it proved that I was right, as usual.

"'Against whom do you desire protection?' I queried.

"'Against—against my widow,' he stammered, 'and—and her husband.'

"'My good sir,' I said, 'I am afraid you are mentally deranged. Pray compose yourself.'

"'If you will allow me,' he said, 'I'll explain what I mean, but you must promise me not to use what I may tell you now as evidence against me at any future time.'

"I gave the promise, being very curious.

"'You see, it was in this way,' began the man, 'ten years ago I was married in the States to a Miss Groatson, and we lived together for more than five years. But we were gradually getting deeper and deeper into debt, and at last I made up my mind to leave her, and do the best I could for myself. I was dead sick of it all. I left a note telling her that I was about to commit suicide; I made off with all the ready money I could raise. Well, she believed me readily enough, and in less than two months she married again.

"'This time it was a Mr. Smith. They lived together for two or three years, unaware of my existence.'

"I here thought it my duty to put in a word of reproof.

"'You acted most reprehensibly,' I said, 'in allowing them to marry when you were alive.'

"'Well, you see, I didn't know they were married until they had been living together for above two years. I learnt it afterwards. I adopted an alias, and lived quietly enough in Philadelphia, having got a situation as stage manager at a pretty good theatre.

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"'Well, it happened one day that I had to go on to the boards before a crowded house to announce the delay of some star or other. In the very front row I saw my wife and her second husband. I judged from their dress that they were very well-to-do, and I determined I would have something out of them before long. They did not recognise me in the glare of the footlights. I sent a boy to follow them home, and he brought me word that they were staying at the Adelphi. The next day I went to see Smith, and told him I'd go to Europe and keep the fact of my existence a secret if he would give me £100,000.

"'He said:

"'"Look here, there is to be no blackmailing this time. Either you'll take your passage money and go, you scoundrel, or we'll fight."

"'He touched his pistol significantly, and, being a bit timid myself, I'd really no choice but to accede to his first proposal. He handed me over enough for a second class passage—the shabby dog—and I left.

"'I determined I would be revenged, so I thought out a scheme. I waited until the day before that on which my steamship was to sail, and then I went to the hotel and watched Smith and my wife out. Then I went in, and boldly asked for Mrs. Smith.

"'"She's gone out," said the waiter; "will you wait?"

"'I said that I would, and the man showed me into a well-furnished room.

"'"Look here," I said, slipping half-a-dollar into his hand, "I've particular reasons for not wishing Mr. Smith to see me. Can you put me anywhere where you are sure that he won't come?"

"'"Only in the lady's bedroom, sir."

"'"That will do as well as anywhere else," I said. "I'll answer for it that she won't be offended."

"'"This way, then," he said, and led me to it.

"'When he had left me I looked around, and saw, as I had hoped, a small morocco-covered box on the dressing-table. I saw it was a jewel-case, so I slipped it as it was into the pocket of the overcoat I wore, and after waiting for a few minutes, I went quietly off, and the next day sailed for Europe. I trusted that the fear of a scandal would prevent Smith from making any attempt to recover the jewels. I opened the box in the cabin the day after we had sailed, and found, as I had supposed, that it contained gems to all appearances very valuable.

"'I had nowhere to keep it except in a locked cash-box on my dressing table, so you will believe that I was very anxious. All went well, however, and we arrived at Liverpool in safety. I determined to go straight on to London, so that very night I left Liverpool. I dared not trust the jewels in my trunk, but carried them in my portmanteau into the railway carriage—a second-class.

"'To my surprise one of my fellow passengers from America got into the same compartment. He was my only companion. We talked together for a few minutes, and then I fell into a doze. When I awoke, my companion and the portmanteau were both gone!

"'I was wild, you may imagine, but I dared not apply to the police. The thing that made me come to you happened after I had got to London. I was looking at the shops in the Strand one day when a boy gave me this and ran away.'

"He gave it to me," said Sergeant Drew, and this was it:

If you do not send the jewels to me at the Metropolitan Hotel, Piccadilly, before to-morrow night, you will discover that the pistol is as powerful a weapon in London as it is in Philadelphia.

H. Smith.

"The man continued," went on the Sergeant, "to say that two days had passed since he had received the note, and he could bear his fears no longer; he could not sleep for fear of attack, and as for going out at night, he should as soon think of flying. He appealed to me for protection, and I felt that he had come to the right man. I sent him home under the surveillance of a policeman, and then came to you for advice. He wants me to go to the Metropolitan, and explain matters to Mr. Smith. He thinks, that I, being an officer of the law, should be believed."

"Do you think that the man is speaking truth when he says that the jewels were stolen from him?"

"I am sure that he is. I am of the opinion that he bears the trade-mark of contrition on his face. Besides, do you think he would have appealed to the law for protection if he had stolen goods in his possession?"

Sergeant Drew looked at me patronisingly.

"In that case," I said, "I'd do just as he asked me."

"Well, will you come with me to the Hotel?" said the Sergeant uneasily; "I'd like to have company."

"All right," I said, rising lazily, and stretching myself. "We will go at once."

It took us about twenty minutes to reach the Metropolitan. I took the lead, and asked for Mr. Smith.

"Which Mr. Smith?" asked the waiter promptly. "There are four staying here."

This caused us some embarrassment, but at last we found the man we wanted, and we were shown up into his sitting-room, Mrs. Smith being out. I felt some curiosity as we entered the room. We saw a big-bearded, vulgar man, with the stamp of the West upon him. He was sitting by the fireplace, his feet elevated far above his head, the empty grate on his left acting as a spittoon, when we entered.

I introduced myself and the Sergeant to him, and explained the whole business to him as I had heard it. He rolled the quid in his mouth, and looked at us half suspiciously, but after we had given him several references, he was forced to believe us.

"Then," he said, when we had finished, "if that's so, I suppose I must let the little wretch go. The sooner we leave England the better."

We parted on very good terms, and Drew went back to his office, proud of the way in which he had conducted the business, and promising to let me know if anything further occurred.

It was about a fortnight after this—three days after Smith and his wife had left England, that Drew came into my room. Some of the importance seemed to have been knocked out of him, and as he threw himself into the easiest chair in the room, he uttered these three words in a desponding tone:

"We've been sold!"

"Why, what's happened?" said I.

He pulled something from his pocket, carefully wrapped up in brown paper. He slowly undid it, and disclosed to view a small red morocco box. Opening it, he took from it a letter, written in a small, neat, almost womanish hand. I seized it from him, and read it eagerly. This was what it said:

Sergeant, you've been regularly sold for once. I could not resist letting you know how I had done you. I shall be safe away from England before you get this. I've disposed of my wife's jewels all right, and I am sending the box to repay you in some slight degree for your trouble. If you see Smith tell him he is welcome to Mrs. N. for me. Horatio Needham.

Drew and I let the matter drop, and nothing more was heard of Mrs. Smith's jewels. W

A Broken Mask

BY JOAN BARRETT.

SUMMARY.

The story opens with an introduction to the inmates of two farmhouses in an English village named Thorneydene. Honeypots Farm has recently been taken by a young stranger, John Gillway, about whom there seems to be a mystery.

His neighbour, Farmer Strange, is a widower with twin daughters, Diana and Kitty, who have been brought up for the most part by a wealthy aunt, Mrs. Caffyn, who is about to take them on the Continent.

Gillway has already fallen in love with Kitty, who was at first pleased by his attentions. She soon wearied of them, but being half afraid of him, makes many promises of fidelity before going abroad with her sister and aunt, which she never intends to keep.

CHAPTER III.

The Nabob.

The girls went to London the following morning and were met by Mrs. Caffyn, resplendent in black silk and sable. She was a good-hearted little woman, and unaffectedly fond of her nieces. Her greatest ambition was to secure rich husbands for them. She regarded it as her duty.

She was so overjoyed to get her children back again that she forbore laughing at their great string-tied hamper of eggs and chickens and butter and hams, and the enormous bunch of gaudy-coloured dahlias that Farmer Strange had sent her. She really pitied Strange, believing honestly that upon their twenty-first birthday both girls would elect to live permanently with her.

"London is simply vile just now," she told them as they rattled home in her luxurious brougham. "We must get out of it as soon as we can. The streets look quite depressing. I've been thinking, dears, that we might go to Naples and then out to Capri. I have just heard from—a friend that Capri is the most exquisite place in the whole wide world."

"Oh, aunt, how lovely!" cried Kitty, clasping her hands.

Quiet Di, leaning back in her corner with her heart full of her lonely old father, tried to smile and to appear delighted. It mattered very little to Di where her aunt took her; but she felt that she would be lacking in gratitude if she remained silent and unresponsive to so much kindness.

"Capri!" she exclaimed. "Isn't that where Tiberius had a palace, auntie?"

"Goodness knows, my dear," answered Mrs. Caffyn. "I only know that Pajano has a hotel there: a place that seems to be an elysium, where you can do as you like, and meet people in every position, from Germans who eat soft-boiled eggs with their knives to Italian countesses and French duchesses who wear their diamonds all day long. And I am told that the place swarms with artists and literary people and delightful Americans, and that after dinner there are dances in the hall, and primitive kinds of games for the young people. And the price is nothing at all. And you can gather oranges and lemons from the trees in the hotel gardens!"

"All this for nothing at all?" asked Di with a smile.

Di had various recollections of accompanying her aunt and Kitty to several hotels that had been described by Mrs. Caffyn in glowing terms, and that had turned out to be utter failures. Mrs. Caffyn was always enthusiastic about places and people at first.

"Who has been telling you all this?" Kitty asked.

Mrs. Caffyn seemed to hesitate, looking away from the girls and flushing to her eyes. Di watched her in growing perplexity. Her aunt's embarrassment was very evident, and it was such an unusual occurrence for Mrs. Caffyn to betray emotion of that kind.

"Oh, I met somebody the other afternoon at Mrs. Selwyn's," she answered at length, speaking hurriedly. "I forget now who it was. One so often remembers the conversation and forgets the speaker. It's like eating jam and forgetting the maker's name, you know."

"I hope that person won't turn out to be like one of those badly informed guide-books that are always leading you wrong, and cause such cruel disappointments, and make you feel that you would like to be present at the writer's execution," said Di. "It's a long way to go, auntie——"

"Oh, there is no danger of our being disappointed, Di," said Mrs. Caffyn positively. "My informant has lived at Pajano's, and spoke from real genuine experience. We must begin shopping to-morrow. We shall want a lot of things."

They began their shopping expedition the next day, and Di was surprised to find that Mrs. Caffyn was far more concerned about her own wardrobe than she had hitherto been when shopping for her nieces. She bought herself so many juvenile-looking articles of clothing that Kitty was amazed, and a little inclined to resent the new order of affairs. Mrs. Caffyn was continually appealing to the girls for advice. Did this suit her, and did she look nice in something else?

"Aunt must have got a new admirer. I think it must be serious this time," Kitty whispered to Di while Mrs. Caffyn was trying on an elaborate tea-gown in a show-room, "and she crimps her hair to make it look like yours. Have you noticed?"

Kitty had always considered that Di's only beauty laid in her thick masses of chestnut-brown hair. It was full of natural waves, and little fluffy pieces were always straying about over her temples, and breaking loose at the nape of her white slender neck. Di was dark, with a grave expression in her pale face; she carried her head well, with the manner of a girl who had never committed one action of which she was ashamed.

Di looked again at Mrs. Caffyn and saw that the strange new something that had perplexed her when she had seen her aunt for the first time upon the previous day was due to a fresh arrangement of Mrs. Caffyn's hair. It did not look so grey as Di remembered it; indeed it scarcely looked grey at all. At the back, Mrs. Caffyn, with her small tight waist, and crimped brown hair, passed very easily for a woman of thirty instead of fifty. Mrs. Caffyn was rarely without an admirer. Being a woman of means, well-connected, and still attractive in appearance, bright and youthful in her manner, it was no unusual experience for her to receive an offer of marriage. Hitherto she had treated the idea of her re-marrying as a joke, and a most unlikely occur-

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rence. Di wondered if Kitty's surmise were right, and admitted to herself that it was not improbable.

Mrs. Caffyn seemed eager to leave London. She hurried forward their preparations for departure, greatly to Kitty's relief, who dreaded the arrival of John Gillway. She had already received a passionate letter from him, in which he spoke of his loneliness and his craving to see her again. Kitty dreaded the knowledge of her flirtation with him reaching Mrs. Caffyn. She felt heartily ashamed of having at one time believed herself to be in love with Gillway. For him she had no feeling of pity, but rather an angry resentment, because he was so much more strong than she.

Di knew nothing of those stolen interviews in the farm meadows and woods. She had seen that Gillway admired Kitty, but then who did not admire her?

They were settled at Capri before the end of January, and then the girls discovered the reason of Mrs. Caffyn's anxiety to visit Pajano's hotel.

As they entered the hall a young man ran quickly from a lounge-chair, and came forward with outstretched hands to greet Mrs. Caffyn. He had a very youthful face, and bright blue-grey eyes, and he was certainly handsome and distinguished in appearance. Mrs. Caffyn blushed like a young girl as they shook hands.

They began their shopping expedition.

"I thought you were never coming," Di heard him say in a low, reproachful tone. "The time has seemed endless."

Mrs. Caffyn smiled as she looked at the girls.

"Let me introduce you to the real causes of my delay," said she genially. "My dears, Mr. Bernard Eliot, my nieces and adopted daughters, the Misses Strange."

Di looked at Mr. Bernard Eliot straight in the eyes as she bowed. When Di liked people at first sight she had a charming habit of offering them her hand. She did so with Eliot. His candid regard and a certain inexplainable winning charm in his face had won her liking.

"I hope you will like the place," said he, looking not at pretty pouting Kitty nor flushed, happy-eyed Mrs. Caffyn, but at quiet Di, whose eyes had wandered from him to the picture-painted walls. "I have wandered nearly all over the world, and I have never met with but one Pajano. Let me show you the dining-room. It is as original as the rest of the house."

He spoke to Di, and she started and cast a glance at Mrs. Caffyn. Di had not had very many admirers. People had found her cold and constrained, and did not always get on well with her. She was too reserved and quite unlike Kitty, who was continually making new friends.

"Oh, do let us see it!" cried Kitty eagerly.

She and Mrs. Caffyn went into raptures over the long room with its painted walls, and their delight was even greater when they found that their friend had procured rooms for them in one of the many white-washed cottages that laid at the back of the house and belonged to the hotel.

They went out into the garden and through a tangle of palms and roses and golden fruit-laden trees, up and down rough uneven steps, and into a plain three-roomed cottage with white-washed walls and red-tiled floor, and simply furnished.

"When it rains it's rare fun rushing to the hotel for one's dinner under an umbrella in the dark," said Eliot to Di.

She smiled responsively. He wondered if she was never going to speak. She must have a pretty voice, he thought.

"But, surely, it never *can* rain here!" said Kitty, glancing at the dazzlingly blue sky and the sun-filled garden with its fruit and flowers.

"Oh, doesn't it! We get grand seas here! I've never seen finer. There's a fancy dress ball to-night," said Eliot, "and everyone has to appear masked. The idea is that we shall get into each other's seats and puzzle everybody as to our identity, you know. The masks are not to

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be taken off until dinner is over. It's only a couple of francs. I do hope you'll all come."

"Indeed we will," Mrs. Caffyn declared, "only—we've no fancy dresses."

"Some of them—the other ladies, I mean—are using up sheets and towels. There's the jolliest American girl where I'm quartered. She only came here yesterday. She's coming out in a grand costume, she says, and it's all made up of sheets and white things, you know."

"But we can't all wear the same dress," objected Kitty. "Isn't there a draper's here?"

"There's a little bit of a shop where you can get red stuff and silk and Neapolitan caps and things like that," said Eliot in an anxious tone. "Shall I take you there? I speak Italian like a native with all his teeth out, and a hot baked apple in his throat; but I generally manage to make 'em understand. The great thing, you know, is pantomime. Point to things and then count on your fingers. See? And if they want you to pay more than you feel like giving, say *Mai*, that means never, and then make an ugly grimace at 'em. I got on splendidly that way. Shall I go with you to buy the things?"

Again he spoke to Di. Her beautiful lips parted in a smile as she answered: "No, thank you. I should like to try my own way of getting on with them. And besides," as he looked disappointed, "if you are with us, you will see what we buy and that will help you to recognise us easily."

"May I take you to a tea-shop?" he asked. "I know such a nice one where you get good tea and little cakes and sweets——"

Mrs. Caffyn had been watching and listening with a smile upon her face. She interrupted Eliot to cry: "Indeed you may. We shall be ready at four o'clock. You will find us here."

"Auntie, who is he, and how did you get to know him?" Kitty asked when they were alone.

"Mrs. Selwyn introduced him to me. He came over from India in the same ship with her husband and children."

"He is very handsome," said Kitty. "Is — he rich?"

"Immensely rich. Somebody has given him the nickname of the 'Young Nabob.' He was born in India. Nobody knows anything more than that about him. I don't quite know what his people were. It doesn't matter, as they are all dead," answered Mrs. Caffyn as she took off her little bonnet and smoothed her hair before the mirror. "I wish there was a wardrobe in the room," she added, with a discontented glance at a row of pegs. "Martin is quite capable of giving me warning. She will never reconcile herself to hanging my best gowns on the wall."

Di had walked out upon the little terrace where a Gloire de Dijon was opening its pale scented petals to the sun, and doing its best to cover and conceal the plain white wall. The air was redolent of the scent of flowers. A great box of wallflowers in a corner made a gay patch of colour, and seemed to look down with good-natured tolerance upon a humble but none the less pretty blue periwinkle growing beneath.

Before Di stretched the queer-shaped garden with its palms and roses, its orange and lemon trees and the almonds and peaches as yet not in flower. Between the trees at the side of the hotel she caught a glimpse of the sea, dotted here and there with latteen sails. Overhead the sky was as blue as a sparrow's egg and almost unflecked with clouds. It was an ideal afternoon, and the flowers and sunshine made it hard to realise that the month was December, and that in England the day might be cold and snowy and depressing.

A great feeling of exhilaration and happiness stole over Di. Leaning her arms upon the rail, she began to think of her father and tried to picture him tramping over the frozen fields beneath a grey, overhanging sky, maybe thinking of her and wondering what she was doing.

Mrs. Caffyn coming out upon the terrace five minutes later found her in the same pensive attitude. The elder woman sighed as she watched her niece.

"Dreaming of the Nabob, Di?" she asked, trying to speak lightly but with a strange new inflection in her tones that made Di turn and stare at her in surprise. Mrs. Caffyn was

Leaning her arms upon the rail.

smiling, but Di thought that her lips were drawn as though she was in pain.

"The Nabob? Oh, no. I was thinking of dad. Isn't it difficult to tear one's eyes away from the sunshine and to make oneself see black clouds and white snow and frost-covered window-panes. Betty will soon be lighting the lamp at home."

"It's awful to think of. Kitty and I have been speculating about our costumes for to-night. She is going as a nun, and I thought that I might go as a waiting-maid. What should you think, Di?"

Di nodded, though it seemed to her that it would have been more appropriate if Kitty and Mrs. Caffyn had reversed their *rôles*.

"I can borrow a cap and apron from Martin. Those little white caps are *so* fetching. And a black velvet mask ought to look striking. What are you going to wear?"

Di glanced down at her dark blue travelling dress, and thought for a moment with a grave little pucker between her black brows.

"I'll dress as a fish-wife," said she at length. "I can tuck in my bodice at the neck and twist a red scarf round it. A red sash and a red cap will be all that I need buy."

"You will look nice in red," murmured Mrs. Caffyn almost regretfully. "I wish I had thought of that costume for myself."

"Oh, I don't mind exchanging. A waiting-maid's dress will please me just as well, auntie."

Mrs. Caffyn bent and kissed Di.

"You are a dear good girl," she said. "If you are quite sure——"

Di was quite sure. They strolled down the hill to the shop where red twill and Neapolitan caps were to be bought, and made their purchases. As they passed a confectioner's Eliot came out to them.

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"I've got the nicest little table in a corner where we can see everybody," said he. "The room is always crowded at this time."

He was very attentive to Mrs. Caffyn during the bright little meal, and yet Kitty thought that he was smitten with

He seemed to admire all three ladies.

her own pretty self. The Nabob could not do the smallest thing without investing it with a charm. There was tender chivalry in the way he poured cream into the tea-cups, and he handed pound cake with such a winning smile that the cake seemed to gain in flavour. He looked a great deal at Mrs. Caffyn and a great deal at Di and Kitty. He seemed to admire all three ladies as one might admire a cluster of beautiful flowers. It was evident that his sweet and amiable disposition made him anxious to please everybody. He had to shake hands with half of the occupants in the room and exchange bows with the other half when he and his little party were leaving the shop. Mrs. Caffyn watched him with a look in her eyes that is only to be seen in the eyes of a mother or a proud wife whose heart has never been tortured with jealousy. Once she whispered to Di: "Isn't he popular here? It is just the same in London."

Di smiled back at her aunt and wondered if Mrs. Caffyn had fallen in love with the Nabob.

"I hope not, oh, I do hope not!" she thought to herself as she followed Mrs. Caffyn and Kitty into the street. "He is so young."

The Nabob walked by Di's side back to the palm-shaded hotel. He was eager to know if they were comfortable and if there was anything whatever that he could do to add to their comfort. He seemed quite distressed at hearing that they had everything necessary to their welfare.

"I suppose I mustn't ask you to give me a tiny hint as to the kind of dress you will wear to-night?" he asked Di in a low voice.

She shook her head, looking at him frankly.

"I am sure that I shall recognise you. I've never seen another woman——" he paused and bit his lip, looking away from her face to the sunny wall, where boxes of little pink oxalis were blossoming. "You don't care to make me a bet that I shan't pick you out, and get a seat by your side?" he added in quite a different tone, and loud enough for Kitty and Mrs. Caffyn to hear.

"I don't bet," Di answered a little stiffly.

She was growing angry with herself because already she found herself liking the Nabob. And Di so rarely took to strangers with facility that there seemed to her to be something abnormal in the Nabob to have this strange power of extorting affection from people who were barely acquainted with him. She looked at him impatiently as he walked by her side with the glow of the afternoon sun upon his face.

It could not be his good looks that unlocked the door to people's hearts in this extraordinary way, handsome as the Nabob was with his clear-cut features and beautiful mouth. "It must be the sweetness of his expression," thought Di in sudden remorse for her irritable sensation towards him. "He looks so kind and candid and amiable."

He turned at that moment and met her puzzled scrutiny with such honesty in his smiling eyes that an odd impulse seized her to take his arm. She put both hands upon her parasol and began to talk hurriedly to Kitty.

"I wonder if aunt and Kitty feel as drawn towards him as I do?" she asked herself with a hot blush. Then she smiled. "Anyone would really think that the Nabob mesmerised people!"

CHAPTER IV.

"Home-keeping Hearts are Happiest."

Di sat alone by the sea and tried to think it all out. She felt very happy, but with the happiness a feeling of uneasiness had mingled. She looked away at Vesuvius with its thin umbrella-shaped cloud of smoke, and then her eyes fell upon the blue sea and the boats and the picturesque fishermen. The men were all loafing and lounging about, watching their wives and daughters carrying stones from the shore to a cargo-boat. From time to time a brown-skinned dark-eyed fellow shouted out a few words of direction to his women-folk as they hurried past, bending wearily beneath their burdens. The lap-lap of the waves was pleasant and soothing. Its song and the sunshine together made one feel how good it would be to lie and dream until the sun went down and the stars peeped out to look down upon the quiet world.

Di clasped her hands in her lap, forcing herself to think over the events of the past three months. Did Bernard Eliot love her, and did Mrs. Caffyn really believe that she herself was the object of the young man's affections? And Kitty? What of her? The uneasy load upon Di's heart deepened. It was not the Nabob's fault that everyone fell in love with him. Di felt sure of that. She had watched his manner towards Mrs. Caffyn and Kitty, and it had never varied. He had always been the same gay, kind, chivalrous gentleman, anxious to please, unselfish in his regard for others, and very thoughtful for everyone's welfare. No. The Nabob was clearly not to blame. Mrs. Caffyn and Kitty were foolish in wilfully misconstruing kind actions into expressions of some deeper sentiment.

Suddenly Di started. What if she was doing the same? The colour died away in her cheeks, and painstakingly she

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went back in her memory to the night of the fancy ball when the Nabob had sat by her side during dinner and, in the disguise of a white monk, had whispered such pretty things to her. He had seen her portrait in Mrs. Selwyn's drawing-room and he had fallen in love with it. To meet her he had induced Mrs. Caffyn to visit Capri. He had told her that she was ten times more charming than her photograph had represented her—but—did not men often make those kind of speeches and not really mean them? Something rose up in Di's heart and retorted that some men might be weak or base enough to trifle with a girl's love, but the Nabob did not belong to that class of men. He was loyal and true. Oh, why were Mrs. Caffyn and Kitty so blind and foolish?

The breeze suddenly brought her a strong whiff of scented heather. Di turned, and her pulses beat quicker. The Nabob was standing behind her smiling, and he carried a great bouquet of wild flowers in his hands. He looked so young, so handsome and so strong, standing there in the clear afternoon light, with the sun shining upon his fair moustache and hair, and his white teeth gleaming between his parted lips as he smiled upon her.

"I thought that I should have found you in our favourite walk," he said reproachfully. "I've waited there quite an hour. Did I make a mistake in hoping to find you there—or did you forget?"

Di looked at him very fearlessly.

"I did not forget," she answered in a low voice. "I knew that you would go there. I came here by preference. I wanted to think."

"Of me?"

He had taken a seat at her side, and as he spoke he laid the flowers in her lap. The scent of the heath and the white narcissi made Di feel giddy.

"Yes," she said. "I wanted to think of you—and of my father."

She paused a moment and very gently put the flowers upon the rock.

"Aunt has told you that in a fortnight's time Kitty and I shall be twenty-one?"

"Yes—and that you are returning to London to-morrow. I am glad, for I am obliged to leave Capri this week."

He laid the flowers in her lap.

"You know," said Di steadily, "that my father is only a poor farmer. He is not *very* well educated, my poor old dad; but he is the kindest, dearest, noblest father in the world. Aunt always speaks of his being a 'land-owner.' So he is, but he does not own much land. Our farm is only a hundred acres."

Eliot nodded, smiling as he listened. It was as though he knew all that Di was nerving herself to tell him—knew it, and admired her for her courage and honesty.

"When we are twenty-one, Kitty and I, we are to decide whether we shall live always with dad or with aunt. I have always decided in my mind that I shall live with dad. I am going to him on the very day that I attain my majority. My father is very dear to me."

"Di," said Eliot, calling her for the first time by her Christian name, "this decision of yours makes me—reverence and admire you more than ever. You are not angry?"

He had kissed her hand. Di flushed as she drew it away.

"Your sister is not going with you, of course?"

"No, she will remain with aunt."

"She does not love your father so much as you do," said he in disapproval. "She is quite another creature."

"Kitty doesn't care for the country," Di said apologetically. "She wearies of green fields and grass. I love it. The smell of the upturned earth, the rustle of the dead leaves, the trees with their beautiful covering in summer, and their gaunt nakedness in winter, the very sound of the spades going through the earth delights me. And the birds and flowers! The dear little red fungi that one finds in winter, the last bits of clinging wild geraniums, the scattered tufts of yellow ragwort. Oh, I can't tell you how dearly I love them all!"

Her cheeks were flushed. She looked at Vesuvius as though her imagination had carried her far away from sunny Capri to Thorneydene.

"It is a very beautiful place where your father lives," said Eliot, after watching her in admiring silence for a few moments, "but lonely, I suppose? No houses—big country seats—near?"

"Oh, ever so many. There is Lady Foley's place, and Baron Schreiner's, and the Hon. Mrs. Jamieson's—and several others."

"I had no idea that Thorneydene could boast of such aristocratic inhabitants. I imagined it to be a tiny, out-of-the-way village."

"So it is. Of course, these residences are not all in Thorneydene itself, only near it."

"I suppose the owners of these country seats are poor people who reside in the country for the sake of economy?" said Eliot, looking a little bored.

"No; they are all rich people. Lady Foley is tremendously wealthy, and there is the American widow—I'd forgotten her—Mrs. Raffin—she has a new house. She is very, very rich!"

Eliot stretched out his hand for the flowers, and carefully arranged the border of ferns.

"Do you remember when we found the first lilac crocus in our favourite walk?" he asked. "And the big violets, and the narcissi in the wood? What a happy time we've had. It doesn't seem possible that we can have passed three months here! A quarter of a year of happiness is a lot to get out of the twelve months. Di, tell me, have you been happy, too?"

She would not look at him as she murmured:

"Yes."

"Shall I see you in London—shall you stay there?"

"No. Only a week or so. I shall be home upon the day of my birthday—the twenty-ninth of April."

"I wonder what you will do when you are at home?"

"I am going to make butter and cheese, and perhaps learn to milk cows. I am not quite sure about learning the last accomplishment, but I shall try. And I shall keep fancy poultry," said Di, trying hard to control her voice. She was angry with herself because of that foolish quiver that would creep into her throat. Why was it that she felt no pleasure in thinking of these simple home duties? Hitherto she had always looked forward to fulfilling them,

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and had thought of them with keen delight. To-day her heart ached, and there was a sordid ring in the enumeration of butter and cheese making, and milking cows, and keeping

Put one cold hand to her throat.

poultry that she had never before noticed. Was Thorneydene really attractive after all?

"I can't fancy this pretty white hand turning a churn," said Eliot, looking at the hand in her lap.

Di laughed, and rose from her seat. She felt angry now, though even to herself she dare not admit that she had a reason for this feeling of disappointment that had stolen over her.

"It will not be very white when I have been a dairymaid for a few months," said she in a harsh voice.

"I—I think I must be returning to the hotel. There's such a lot of packing to do."

Eliot sprang to his feet. His face was pale, and his eyes were strangely tender as they rested upon the girl's white, drawn face. Without a word, he drew her to him, and kissed her. She felt his kisses upon her cheek, and tried to draw herself away.

"Oh, Di!" she heard him whisper. "How I admire you! How brave, and sweet, and good you are, my darling!"

She tore herself away, trampling in her agitation over the fallen flowers. Her cheeks were scarlet, when she looked at herself in the mirror in her bedroom.

"He admires me!" she cried to herself with a little hysterical laugh. "He admires me! Would a man who loved say what he said? If he loves me—why didn't he tell me so?"

The partition walls were very thin in the white-washed cottage. Kitty's sweet, happy voice, speaking in the adjoining room, fell upon Di's ears.

"The Nabob has received a host of invitations, Aunt Lu-lu, from people in the hotel. He is going to stay with the Malets in Yorkshire next week."

"Nasty, vulgar parvenus!" retorted Mrs. Caffyn. "Maud Malet makes no secret of *her* infatuation for the Nabob. She is always looking at him as though she feared that the earth would suddenly open and swallow him up. She looks positively idiotic when he is near her! If I were her mother, I'd send her back to the schoolroom. As if *she* can ever hope to marry a man so rich and handsome and popular as the Nabob! It is quite too mad an idea." Di gasped and put one cold hand to her throat.

"He will marry some handsome, accomplished girl of *good* family when he *does* take a wife," went on Mrs. Caffyn, and Di detected the false ring in her aunt's voice, and knew that Mrs. Caffyn's words did not come from her heart. "He is rich enough to marry anybody; but he will never marry a fool, nor yet a girl who comes of such a stock as Miss Malet has the misfortune to own for her relations. *I* know the Nabob's ideas about marriage, Kitty."

Di removed the neck-ribbon, folded it mechanically, and placed it upon her dressing-table. Once her lips quivered, but it was only when she murmured: "Oh, Daddy, Daddy! How could I ever want not to go back to you, dear?"

(To be continued.)

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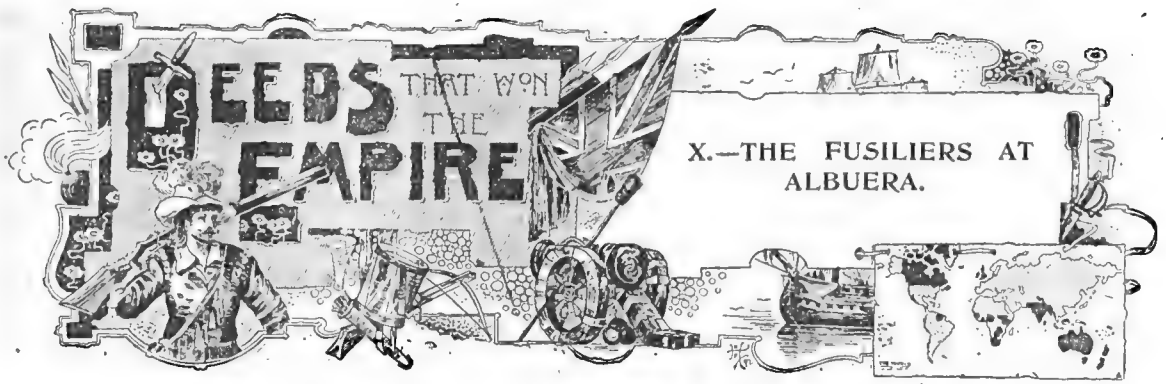

ALBUERA is the fiercest, bloodiest, and most amazing fight in the mighty drama of the Peninsular War.

On May 11th, 1811, the English guns were thundering sullenly over Badajos. Wellington was beyond the Guadiana, pressing Marmont; and Beresford, with much pluck, but little skill, was besieging the great frontier fortress. Soult, however, a master of war, was swooping down from Seville to raise the siege. On the 14th, he reached Villa Franca, only thirty miles distant, and fired salvos from his heaviest guns all through the night to warn the garrison of approaching succour. Beresford could not both maintain the siege and fight Soult; and on the night of the 13th he abandoned his trenches, burnt his gabions and fascines, and marched to meet Soult at Albuera, a low ridge, with a shallow river in front, which barred the road to Badajos. As the morning of May 16th, 1811, broke, heavy with clouds, and wild with gusty rainstorms, the two armies grimly gazed at each other in stern pause, ere they joined in the wrestle of actual battle.

All the advantages, save one, were on the side of the French. Soult was the ablest of the French marshals. If he had not Ney's *élan* in attack, or Massena's stubborn resource in retreat, yet he had a military genius, since Lannes was dead, second only to that of Napoleon himself. He had under his command 20,000 war-hardened infantry, forty guns, and 4,000 magnificent cavalry, commanded by Latour Maubourg, one of the most brilliant of French cavalry generals.

Beresford, the British commander, had the dogged fighting courage, half Dutch and half English, of his name and blood; but as a commander he was scarcely third-rate. Of his army of 30,000, 15,000 were Spanish, half-drilled, and more than half starved—they had lived for days on horse-flesh—under Blake, a general who had lost all the good qualities of Irish character, and acquired all the bad ones peculiar to Spanish temper. Of Beresford's remaining troop, 8,000 were Portuguese. He had only 7,000 British soldiers.

Beresford ought not to have fought. He had abandoned the siege of Badajos, and no reason for giving battle remained. The condition of Blake's men, no doubt, made retreat difficult. They had reached the point at which they must either halt, or lie down and die.

The real force driving Beresford to battle, however, was the fighting effervescence in his own blood, and the warlike impatience of his British troops. They had taken no part in the late great battles under Wellington. Busaco had been fought, and Fuentes Onoro gained without them, and they were in the mood —both officers and men—of fierce determination to fight *somebody!*

This was intimated somewhat roughly to Beresford, and he had not that iron ascendency over his troops Wellington possessed. As a matter of fact, he was himself as stubbornly eager to fight as any private in the ranks.

The superiority of Soult's warlike genius was shown before a shot was fired. Beresford regarded the bridge that crossed the Albuera, and the village that clustered at the bridge head, as the key of his position.

He occupied the village with Alten's German brigade, covered the bridge with the fire of powerful batteries, and held in reserve above it his best British brigade, the Fusiliers under Cole, the very regiments who, four hours later, on the extreme right of Beresford's position, were to actually win the battle.

Soult's sure vision, however, as he surveyed his enemies on the evening of the 15th, saw that Beresford's right was his weak point. It was a rough, broken table-land, curving till it looked into the rear of Beresford's line. It was weakly held by Blake and his Spaniards; immediately in its front was a low wooded hill, behind which, as a screen, an attacking force could be gathered.

In the night Soult placed behind this hill the fifth corps under Girard, the whole of his heavy cavalry under Latour Maubourg, and the strength of his artillery. When the morning broke Soult had 15,000 men and 30 guns within ten minutes' march of Beresford's right wing, and nobody suspected it.

No gleam of colour, no murmur of packed battalions, no ring of steel, no sound of marching feet warned the deluded English general of the battle storm about to break on his right wing. A commander with such an unexpected tempest ready to burst on the weakest point of his line was by all the rules of war predoomed.

At nine o'clock Soult launched an attack at the bridge, the point where Beresford expected him; but it was only a feint. Beresford, however, with all his faults, had the soldierly brain to which the actual thunder of the cannon gave clearness. He noticed that the French battalions supporting the attack on the bridge did not press on closely; as a matter of fact as soon as the smoke of artillery from the battle raging at the bridge swept over the field they swung smartly to the left, and at the double hastened to add themselves to the thunderbolt which Soult was launching at Beresford's right.

But Beresford, meanwhile, had guessed Soult's secret, and he sent officer after officer ordering and intreating Blake to change front, so as to meet Soult's attack on

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his flank, and he finally rode thither himself to inforce his commands.

Blake, however, was immovable through pride, and his men through sheer physical weakness. They could die, but they could not march or deploy. Blake at last tried to change front, but as he did so the French attack smote him. Pressing up the gentle rise, Gerard's men scourged poor Blake's flank with their fire; the French artillery, coming swiftly on, halted every fifty yards to thunder on the unhappy Spaniards; while Latour Maubourg's lancers and hussars, galloping in a wider sweep, gathered momentum for a wild ride on Blake's actual rear.

Beresford tried to persuade the Spaniards to charge as the French were thus circling round them. Shouts and gesticulations were all in vain. He was a man of giant height and strength, and he actually seized a Spanish ensign in his iron grip, and carried him bodily, flag and all, at a run for fifty yards towards the moving French lines, and planted him there.

When released, however, the bewildered Spaniard simply took to his heels, and ran back to his friends, as a terrified sheep might run back to the flock!

In half-an-hour Beresford's battle had grown desperate. Two-thirds of the French, in compact order of battle, were perpendicular to his right; the Spaniards were falling into disorder; Soult saw the victory in his grasp, and eagerly pushed forward his reserves. Over the whole hill, mingled with furious blasts of rain, rolled the tumult of a disorderly and broken fight. Ten minutes more would have enabled Soult to fling Beresford's right, a shattered and routed mass, on the only possible line of retreat, and with the French superiority in cavalry his army would have been blotted out.

The share of the British in the fight consisted of three great attacks delivered by way of counter-stroke to Soult's overwhelming rush on the hill held by Blake. The first attack was delivered by the second division under Colborne, led by General Stewart in person.

Stewart was a sort of British version of Ney, a man of vehement spirit, with a daring that grew even more flame-like in the eddying tumult and tempest of actual battle. He saw Soult's attack crumbling up Blake's helpless battalions, while the flash of the French artillery every moment grew closer. It was the crisis of the fight, and Stewart brought on Colborne's men at a run. Colborne himself, a fine soldier with cool judgment, wished to halt and form his men in order of battle before plunging into the confused vortex of the fight above; but Stewart, full of breathless ardour, hurried the brigade up the hill in column of companies, reached the Spanish right, and began to form line by succession of battalions as they arrived.

At this moment a wild tempest of rain was sweeping over the British, as, at the double, they came up the hill; the eddying fog, thick with the smoke of powder, hid everything twenty yards from the panting soldiers. Suddenly the wall of changing fog to their right sparkled into swiftly-moving spots of red; it shone the next instant with the gleam of a thousand steel points; above the thunder of the cannon, the shouts of contending men, rose the awful sound of a tempest of galloping hoofs.

The French lancers and hussars caught the British in open order, and in five fierce and bloody minutes, almost trampled them out of existence!

Two-thirds of the brigade went down.

The 31st Regiment flung itself promptly into square and stood fast—a tiny island, edged with steel and flame, amid the mad tumult; but the French lancers, drunk with excitement, mad with battle-fury, swept over the whole slope of the hill. They captured six guns, and might have done yet more fatal mischief but that they occupied themselves in galloping to and fro across the line of their original charge, spearing the wounded.

One lancer charged Beresford as he sat, solitary and huge, on his horse amid the broken English regiments. But Beresford was at least a magnificent trooper. He put the lance aside with one hand, and catching the Frenchman by the throat, lifted him clean from the saddle, and dashed him senseless on the ground!

The ensign who carried the colours of the 3rd Buffs covered them with his body till he was slain by a dozen lance-thrusts. The ensign who carried the other colours of the same regiment tore the flag from its staff and thrust it into his breast, where it was found, stiff with his blood, after the fight.

The Spaniards, meanwhile, were firing incessantly, but on general principles merely, and into space, or into the ranks of their own allies as might happen, and the 29th, advancing to the help of Colborne's broken men, finding the Spaniards in their path, and firing into their lines, broke sternly into volleys on them in turn. Seldom has a battlefield witnessed a tumult so distracted and wild.

The first English counter-stroke had failed, but the second followed swiftly. The furious rain and fog, which had proved so fatal to Colborne's men, for a moment was in favour of Beresford. Soult, though eagerly watching the conflict, could not see the ruin into which the British had fallen, and hesitated to launch his reserves into the fight. The 31st still sternly held its own against the French cavalry, and this gave time for Stewart to bring up Houghton's brigade.

But this time Stewart, though he brought up his men with as much vehemence as before, brought them up in order of battle. The 29th, the 48th, and the 57th swept up the hill in line, led by Houghton, hat in hand. He fell, pierced by three bullets, but over his dead body, eager to close, the British line still swept. They reached the crest. A deep and narrow ravine arrested their bayonet charge, but with stubborn valour they held the ground they had gained, scourged with musketry fire at pistol-shot distance, and by artillery at fifty yards range, while a French column smote them with its musketry on their flank.

The men fell fast, but fought as they fell. Stewart was twice wounded, Colonel Dutworth, of the 48th, slain. Of the 57th, out of 570 men, 430, with their colonel, Inglis, fell. The men, after the battle, were found lying dead in ranks exactly as they fought.

"Die hard! my men, die hard!" said Inglis when the bullet struck him, and the 57th have borne the name of "Die hards!" ever since. At Inkerman, indeed, more than fifty years afterwards, the "Die hard!" of Inglis served to harden the valour of the 57th in a fight as stern as Albuera itself.

But ammunition began to fail. Houghton's men would not yield, but it was plain that in a few more minutes there would be none of them left, save the dead and the wounded. And at this dreadful moment, Beresford, distracted with the tumult and horror of the fight, wavered.

He called up Alten's men from the bridge to cover his retreat, and prepared to yield the fatal hill. At this juncture, however, a mind more masterful and daring than his own launched a third British attack against the victorious French, and won the dreadful day.

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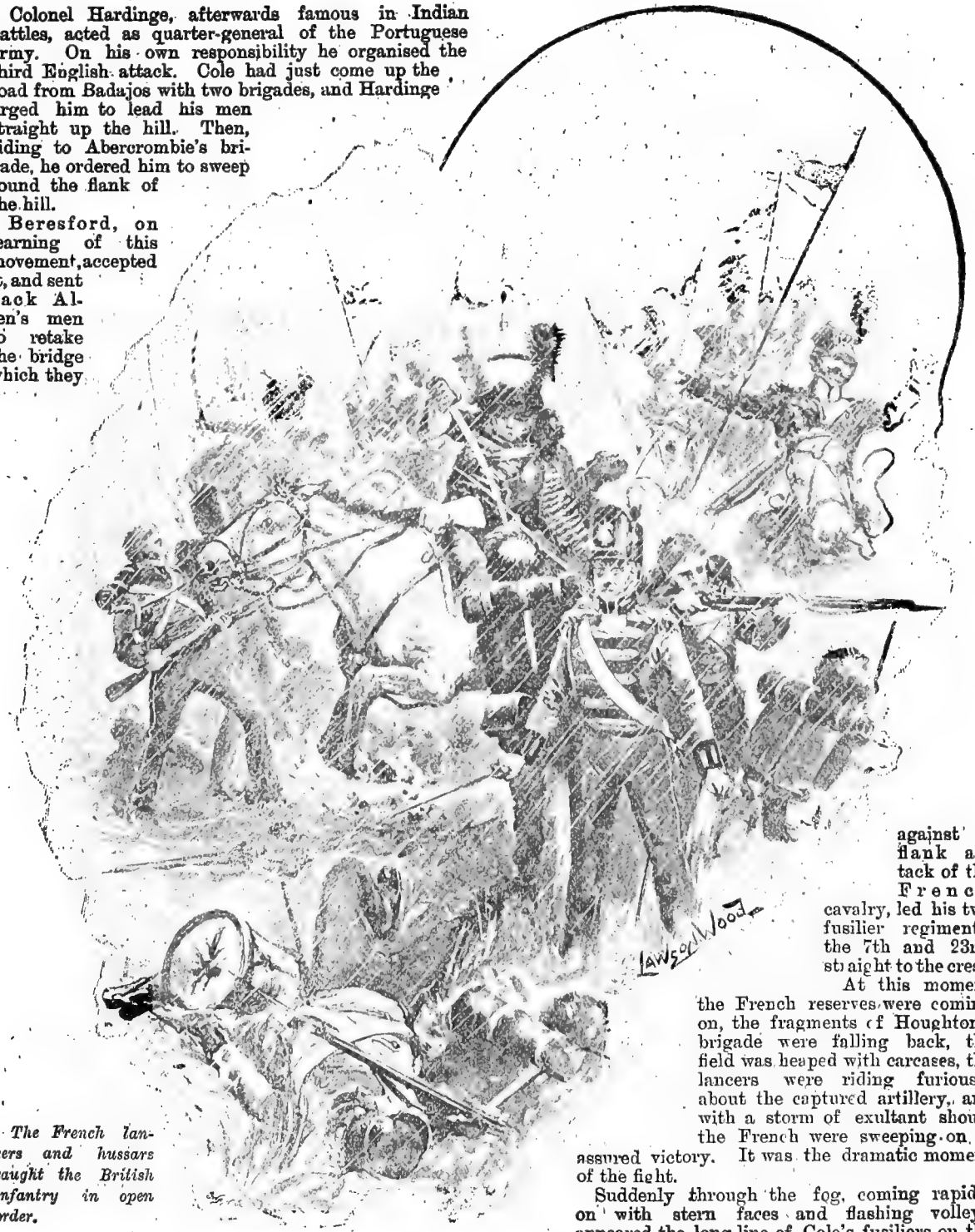
Colonel Hardinge, afterwards famous in Indian battles, acted as quarter-general of the Portuguese army. On his own responsibility he organised the third English attack. Cole had just come up the road from Badajos with two brigades, and Hardinge urged him to lead his men straight up the hill. Then, riding to Abercrombie's brigade, he ordered him to sweep round the flank of the hill.

Beresford, on learning of this movement, accepted it, and sent back Alten's men to retake the bridge which they had abandoned. Abercrombie's men swept to the left of the hill, and Cole, a gallant and able soldier, using the Portuguese regiments in his brigade as a guard against a flank attack of the French cavalry, led his two fusilier regiments, the 7th and 23rd, straight to the crest.



The French lancers and hussars caught the British infantry in open order.

At this moment the French reserves were coming on, the fragments of Houghton's brigade were falling back, the field was heaped with carcases, the lancers were riding furiously about the captured artillery, and with a storm of exultant shouts the French were sweeping on to assured victory. It was the dramatic moment of the fight.

Suddenly through the fog, coming rapidly on with stern faces and flashing volleys, appeared the long line of Cole's fusiliers on the right of Houghton's staggering groups, while at the same exact moment Abercrombie's line broke through the mist on their left. As these grim and threatening lines became visible the French shouts suddenly died down.

It was the old contest of the British line—the "thin red line"—against the favourite French attack in column, and the story can only be told in Napier's resonant prose. The passage which describes the attack of the fusiliers is one of the classic passages of English battle literature, and in its syllables can still be heard the tread of marching feet, the shrill clangour of smitten steel, and the thunder of the musketry volleys.

"Such a gallant line," says Napier, "arising from amid the smoke, and rapidly separating itself from the confused and broken multitude, startled the enemy's masses, which were increasing and pressing forward as to assured victory; they wavered, hesitated, and then, vomiting forth a storm of fire, hastily endeavoured to enlarge their front, while the fearful discharge of grape from all their artillery whistled through the British ranks. Myert was killed, Cole and the three colonels—Ellis, Blackeney, and Hawkshawe—fell wounded; and the fusilier battalions, struck by the iron tempest, reeled and staggered like sinking ships.

"Suddenly and sternly recovering, they closed on their terrible enemies, and then was seen with what a strength and majesty the British soldier fights. In vain did Soult, by voice and gesture, animate his Frenchmen; in vain did the hardiest veterans break from the crowded columns and sacrifice their lives to gain time for the mass to open on such a fair field; in vain did the mass itself bear up, and, fiercely striving, fire indiscriminately on friends and foes, while the horsemen, hovering on the flanks, threatened to charge the advancing line.

"Nothing could stop that astonishing infantry. No sudden burst of undisciplined valour, no nervous enthusiasm weakened the stability of their order; their measured tread shook the ground, their dreadful volleys swept away the head of every formation, their deafening shouts overpowered the dissonant cries that broke from all parts of the tumultuous crowds as, slowly, and with a horrid carnage, it was driven by the incessant vigour of the attack to the farthest edge of the hill.

"In vain did the French reserves mix with the struggling multitude to sustain the fight. Their efforts only increased the irremediable confusion, and the mighty mass, breaking off like a loosened cliff, went headlong down the ascent. The rain flowed after in streams discoloured with blood, and eighteen hundred unwounded men, the remnant of six thousand unconquerable British soldiers, stood triumphant on the fatal hill."

The Battle of Albuera lasted four hours; its slaughter was dreadful. Within the space of a few hundred feet square were strewn some seven thousand bodies, and over this Aceldama the artillery had galloped, the cavalry had charged! The 3rd Buffs went into the fight with twenty-four officers and 750 rank and file; at the roll-call next morning there were only five officers and thirty-five men. One company of the Royal Fusiliers came out of the fight commanded by a corporal; every officer and sergeant had been killed!

Albuera is essentially a soldier's fight. The bayonet of the private, not the brain of the general, won it; and never was the fighting quality of our race more brilliantly shown. Soult summed up the battle in words that deserve to be memorable.

"There is no beating those troops," he wrote, "*in spite of their generals!* I always thought them bad soldiers," he added, with a Frenchman's love of paradox; "now I am sure of it. For I turned their right, pierced their centre, they were everywhere broken, the day was mine, and yet *they did not know it*, and would not run."

("*The Shannon and Chesapeake*" *next week.*)

ON THURSDAY, MAY 6th,

GIRLS,

Our New Paper for Girls of all ages, from Six to Sixty, will make its bow to the Public.

GIRLS will, I am sure, meet with a warm welcome, not only from schoolgirls and home-girls, and young ladies of all sorts and descriptions, but from mothers and teachers as well.

As ***Girls*** will cater for the young in a way in which they have never been catered for before, the paper will be decidedly a novelty, and I venture to think a particularly attractive novelty. Girls, until now, have had to be content either with the "grown-up" literature provided for their elders, or with the namby-pamby stuff—mostly of the feeble love-story order—which is usually considered sufficient for them to feed their minds on.

Now, in the new paper, a step forward has been taken. In the first place there will be no love at all, or if any, of such a transient sort as practically not to count. In the second place, special prominence will be given to all sports and pastimes, and the healthy out-of-doors pursuits in which girls now so freely join.

A kindly, wholesome tone will pervade the pages of ***Girls***, and the object of both Editor and Proprietors will be to establish a bond of mutual understanding between this office and girls throughout the world.

In the first number of ***Girls*** an amusing and brightly-written serial, by Miss Winifred Graham, begins, entitled: "The Great House of Castleton." In this the droll scrapes and absurd adventures of a party of young people, who are sent into the country in the charge only of an elderly housekeeper, will be found really excellent reading.

Short and pithy articles, touching on all subjects of interest to girls, will abound. A short, smartly-written, complete story, will appear in every number, and in No. 1 various interesting series commence. Amongst these I may draw your attention to the opening instalment of "How Two Girls First Saw London," a deliciously humourous account of the impressions of a couple of up-to-date young people, whose parents have come to town for the season, bringing their daughters with them. In "College Sports and Pastimes," a bright and adequate idea is given of the outdoor recreations of girls who are *not* blue-stockings; and, in fact, ***Girls*** will be found replete with good things.

As ***Girls*** is only one penny, and will appear weekly, I advise you to lodge orders with your newsagent at once, not only for the weekly edition, but also for the monthly parts, price sixpence, ready the first of each month.

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£50 IN 23 PRIZES.

Short Stories

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1st PRIZE	Twenty Pounds in Gold.
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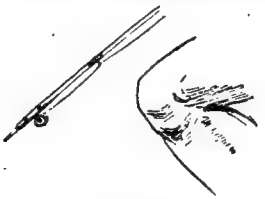
3rd PRIZE	A Five-Pound Note.
4th to 13th PRIZES	Ten Sovereigns.
14th to 23rd PRIZES	Ten Half-Sovereigns.

BELOW you will find ten pictures. Each represents the name of a Peer of the Realm. The title alone is indicated, not the family name. You will see that the first is Rodney, what are the others?

Write down their names in the spaces provided, and keep your lists until you are told to send them in.

Don't be discouraged if you cannot solve them all. Others may be no more clever than yourself. Send in fifty-five, or fifty, or even fewer.

You may forward as many attempts as you like, but each set of six must be in a separate envelope, and will be considered separate attempts.



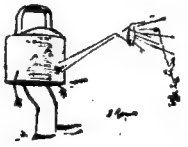
No. 1. RODNEY.

No. 2.....

No. 3.....

No. 4.....

No. 5.....



No. 6.....

No. 7.....

No. 8.....

Remember these Things.

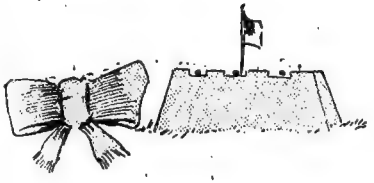
YOUNG PEOPLE should compete and get their elders to help them.

If there is any picture you cannot name some friend may be able to give you the information.

You need only give the titles of the people. The family names are not depicted.

Name.....

Address.....



No. 9.....

No. 10.....

There are plenty of sources from which you can obtain a list of the names of Peers.—Whitaker's Almanack, and publications of that sort. They will help you to win.

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TOLD BY THE DOCTOR.

II.—The Secret of an Old Garden. (*Concluded from last week.*)

CHAPTER II. (*continued*).

Our search for Mr. Gavin Temple was not of long duration. We came upon him just as he was about to enter the green door of the old garden in Pulteney Street. He simply nodded to Ogilvie as we approached, and pushed open the door for us. Frank faced up belligerently.

"I want a word with you, Mr. Temple," he said. "I insist upon knowing what you have done with the body of Miss Yseult Dunbar."

Mr. Gavin stared at him with a surprise which was certainly very well acted, if it was not genuine. He was a tall, sallow, thin old man, with an aquiline nose and little black eyes like his daughter's, but more restless and furtive than hers. His manner was nervous and uneasy, and when he spoke it was with a stutter.

"I do not understand!" he said, looking from one to the other of us in his restless, furtive way.

"I will speak plainly, then," said Ogilvie with suppressed passion. "This morning you smuggled the body of my *fiancée*, coffinless, out of the house—whether living or not, nobody knows—and have buried it, Heaven knows where, for fear we should find out that my darling was not dead."

His voice broke as he ended, and he advanced to the man at the door of the garden with such mad passion in his face that I felt bound to step between. Gavin Temple edged away into the garden.

"He is mad!" he said to me. "The body has not been moved at all." And I made haste to answer:

"You are mistaken, Mr. Temple. Whether you know it or not I cannot tell, but the body of Miss Dunbar has disappeared from the house."

"Disappeared!" he repeated. "It is impossible."

And again his acting, if acting it was, merited all admiration.

"If you go into the house you will find the fact apparent," I said, taking the conduct of the case into my own hands, since my companion had become silent, evidently attempting to master his emotion. "We will wait for you in the garden, to talk over with you the course to be pursued."

Gavin Temple seemed to me to cast a quick, frightened look round the place.

"Come into the house," he said; and I noted his anxiety down in my memory as a fact which might help us in our investigations.

In spite of his evident eagerness for us to enter the house, we insisted on remaining in the garden, and he rejoined us there in a remarkably short space of time, after finding out for himself—or pretending to do—the fact of his ward's disappearance. He had evidently made up his mind to maintain his air of ignorance concerning the affair, and assured us, as volubly as his stutter would allow, that he was as surprised as ourselves.

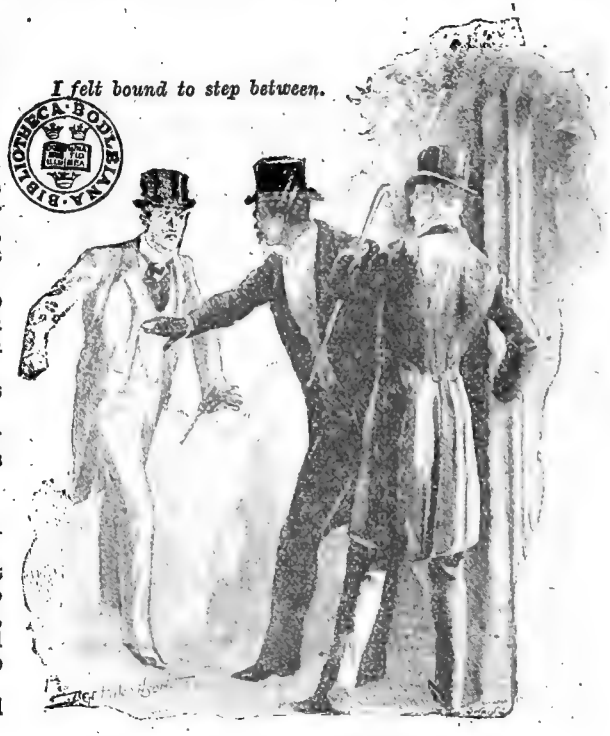
"I suppose you will inform the police of the affair, Mr. Temple?" I said, wondering how he would take the suggestion.

He showed some hesitation.

"I have fought all along against my poor ward's death being turned into a scandal for the benefit of the halfpenny papers," he said at last. "Mr. Ogilvie has been angry with me for not allowing it, I know. I suppose this disappearance is a new move of his to bring publicity into the case."

This was turning the tables with a vengeance; and I saw poor Frank's pale cheeks redden with indignation.

"You are a clever man, Mr. Temple," he said with a calmness which surprised me; "however, this case shall be hushed up no longer. Talk as you like, the affair



I felt bound to step between.

shall be handed over to the proper authorities at once, to be sifted, and whatever villainy has had a place in it will be discovered."

"Whatever villainy there may be is yours," stuttered the tall old man. "If you care to make a nine days' wonder for the riff-raff out of your *fiancée's* death, it is your own matter."

There seemed some likelihood of a quarrel, so I tried to cause a diversion by asking Yseult's guardian whether he had found anything among her papers, or those of her dead grandfather, which could throw any light upon the disappearance. Was there any person who could reap advantage by allowing the slight doubt to remain whether the young lady was actually dead or not?

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The topic turned out to be an unfortunate one, for it reminded Ogilvie of the iron box which we had seen on Gavin Temple's study-table. He accused the old man fiercely of having opened it while the question of Yseult's death was still in doubt.

"My dear young man, how can you be so absurd?" said Gavin, stuttering more than ever. "I can sympathise with your grief at my ward's untimely death, and understand your inclination prompting you to believe that there was some hope; but after Dr. Mitcheller's emphatic decision, it is simply insane to harbour any longer a doubt of your sweetheart's death."

Ogilvie shrugged his shoulders and made no reply.

"Well, as you have opened the box, we may as well see the contents," he said, waving the question, and he took a step in the direction of the house.

The effect of his words on Gavin Temple surprised me. He was all in a nervous tremour at once, and refused under any circumstances to disclose what the box contained.

"The papers which are there," he said, "are not for the public gaze. It is my right, as executor under Lord Englon's will, to read them."

I thought for a moment that my companion would fight for the right to do so; but he turned on his heel.

"All right, Mr. Temple," he said over his shoulder. "I am going now to place the matter in the hands of the police! We shall see whether they do not insist on seeing the contents of the iron box."

And we left the gaunt old man turning white and red in turns and struggling to speak.

"I wonder what the box contains?" said Ogilvie, as we went out into Pulteney Street. "I have a good mind to go back and break it open."

"It can hardly concern the work we have in hand," I said. "To that we must give all our energies, and never rest until we have discovered what has become of the body of Miss Yseult Dunbar. Let us now see if we can trace Gavin Temple's doings throughout to-day. His daughter told me, while you were searching the house, that he had been to an eye specialist in Wigmore Street about his sight. The doctor is a friend of mine. We will go and inquire, in the first place, whether he visited him."

CHAPTER III.

The Burial in the Garden.

Early the next day I went alone to the house in Pulteney Street, determined to see Miss Madge, and try if there was any value in old Mrs. Ogilvie's address.

Our inquiries into Gavin Temple's doings on the previous day had been easy enough, but produced nothing. He had really visited my friend in Wigmore Street, and had stayed some time with him. The rest was accounted for easily, and gave us no clue to follow.

In spite of Frank Ogilvie's threat to the old man, we had not yet called in the aid of the police. The young fellow was, naturally, unwilling to give the case publicity, and I managed to persuade him that, between us, we should do more towards unravelling the mystery than any number of ordinary Scotland Yard men.

I have no great opinion myself of the English detectives. I hoped to extract information from Miss Madge much more cleverly than the most astute of them could do. The difficulty, however, was to see her. I trusted that since my name had not transpired on the previous day, I might obtain admittance by simply sending in my card. When, however, the servant reappeared with the information that Miss Temple was engaged, and could not possibly see me, I began to suspect that my identity was known to either father or daughter better than I thought; and I walked backward and forward along the blank street, trying to invent some other plan of seeing the lady I wished to interview. It was possible that if I waited she might come over herself and give me the chance I wanted, or her father might leave the house and give me a better opportunity of winning an entry into the house.

It was pretty early in the morning, and I had started out without having seen Ogilvie, or having told him what I meant to do, hoping to surprise him with the information I should have gained after the interview was over.

Judge of my surprise, then, as I paced slowly up and down past the green door in Pulteney Street, to see emerging from it Frank Ogilvie himself.

"You here already?" I said. "I was wondering how I could get to see Madge Temple."

"Yes," said the young man, whose face was full of sad seriousness, "your card came in while I was there, but Madge would not see you. She has just been making some revelations to me."

"Revelations that will help us?" I asked excitedly.

"I believe so. I wanted to ask you what I had better do."

"Certainly," I said. "Shall we walk towards the Park while you tell me?"

"I do not think I ought to lose sight of this garden."

"The garden? Why?"

"Because the body of Yseult is buried in it."

I stood still and stared at him in surprise. Then the remembrance of Gavin Temple's evident uneasiness while we were in the garden, and a half-suspicion which had flashed into my mind at the time, came back to me, and I asked:

"Buried by Mr. Temple?"

My companion nodded.

"But when did he do it?" I inquired. "In broad daylight, yesterday, for you saw the corpse in the coffin in the morning?"

Ogilvie shook his head.

"No; last night."

"After we had searched the house?"

"Certainly."

"Then where had he managed to conceal the body during the day?"

"That is a mystery which remains to be solved. The question is, what ought we to do now? We do not know where the spot is. I was wondering whether I ought to try and extract the information from Gavin Temple, now we know so much, or whether we ought to call the police in to assist us. Time is of so much importance."

"Why?"

The poor fellow hardly liked to confess that he had still some slight hope of finding his *fiancée* alive. I dispelled it at once.

"If she had been buried, there can be no doubt of her death," I said. "Even if she were alive before, the exclusion of air would prove fatal. There is no need for haste, unfortunately."

It was difficult to persuade him of the truth of my assertion. He had read in fiction, at least, of people living after burial.

"Fiction, indeed!" I said, "except in cases where the coffin has been inclosed in a vault only."

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Even then he insisted on taking me back into the old garden, with the idea of starting digging operations.

"But where are you going to dig?" I asked, and the poor fellow had to admit that he could not tell.

"I know that it is at the end of the garden farthest from the house, and out of view of the windows," he said, as he walked along in the direction he mentioned. "But that is all."

"And from whom did you gain your information?" I asked. "Miss Madge?"

"Yes; I will tell you all about it after we have discovered the spot."

The spot was more difficult to discover, however, than the young man seemed to imagine. The only ground which had been disturbed was a great bare bed lying under the southern wall about sixty feet by ten, and the whole of the surface of this had been recently turned over, so that it was impossible to mark any difference in one part from another.

"It is useless for us to begin to work on this great plot," I said.

"Tell me all you know, and I will tell you then a plan I have thought out for finding out what we want."

We walked slowly backwards and forwards along the path by the side of the garden bed, while Frank Ogilvie told me what he had discovered. All the while he did so he was looking at the newly-turned earth, looking in vain for some indication which would lead him to the unconsecrated grave of the woman he loved.

"My mother it was who advised me to question Madge," he began. "She—my mother—has an intuition which seems almost miraculous. She was right in this instance. She said that Madge had a hand in causing Yseult's death."

"And she was right?"

"Yes. Madge seems to have been alone responsible for it. I will tell you all about it. After the wrong she has done me, I cannot stay to consider whether I am right or not in doing so. I called early at the house in order to see Miss Temple before her father would be up—he is a late riser—to forbid my entrance to the house, as he might do, or interfere with my cross-examination of his daughter. I found her in a very nervous and highly-wrought state, which turned out to be fortunate for my plans. It required very little on my part to gain from the ill-balanced woman a full confession. Of the beginning of our interview I ought, perhaps, not to speak. I must only say, for the sake of explaining the rest, that Miss Temple was so affected by the sight of my own grief, that she surprised me by a passionate avowal of her love for me. Then she hurried on to her confession. She had been madly jealous of Yseult, and had formed a plan of changing my *fiancée's* feelings with regard to me——"

"And winning you for herself?" I asked, as Ogilvie had naturally some delicacy in expressing the state of affairs.

"Yes," he said gravely. "With this view the wicked woman forged a letter in my handwriting, and showed it to Yseult. In it I was supposed to say that I regretted my engagement, since it prevented my marrying the woman I really loved."

"Good Heavens!" I exclaimed. "What villainy!"

"Yes," said my companion. "The letter must have been cleverly fabricated, for it seems to have appeared genuine to Yseult. That letter was the cause of her seizure, which I am now more than ever convinced was only a trance, and not death."

"If so," I said, "Gavin Temple is a murderer! But go on with your story. How about the burial in the garden?"

"With that the woman had nothing to do. She professes to have been conscience-stricken at the effect of her deed and the sight of my grief, and only hoped that my supposition would prove correct, and that Yseult would recover and marry me, although that would mean the destruction of all her hopes and plans."

"Her repentance was probably quite genuine," I said. "Women are strange creatures. But go on. The burial was a step of Gavin Temple's, I suppose, as you thought all along, to make certain his inheritance of the property?"

"Yes, I suppose so. How he managed to conceal the body, after taking precautions as we were at finding the coffin empty. Like me, she suspected her father. When he called in an extra gardener yesterday to help turn over this plot her suspicions were aroused, and she kept some watch on his movements. After the household had retired last night she heard her father leave his room, go

Walked along in the direction he mentioned.

quietly downstairs, and let himself out of the house. She returned to her bedroom window, to see him cross the lawn in the direction of the tool-house. He emerged with a spade, and walked over the centre grass-plot towards this end of the garden. Here the trees hid him from the window, and his daughter could only wait and imagine what he was doing. After what seemed to her a very long time, her father emerged into the light of the open lawn with the spade still in his hand. He returned it to the tool-house, and re-entered the house, stepping so softly that it was only by the closing of his bedroom door that Madge knew he had come upstairs."

"That is all?" I asked, as Ogilvie paused in his account.

"Yes; but it is sufficient."

"I suppose he actually remained in the garden all the time that he was out of his daughter's sight?"

"It is almost certain. Even if he took such a round-about course to get to the gate, it is strange that he should have returned in the same manner, coming on the lawn through this opening between the trees."

"Yes, it seems pretty certain," I said, "that whatever

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he did, took place in the garden. You think—from the lady's account, I suppose—that he had the body hidden already somewhere in the garden when we made our search?"

"Yes; hurriedly buried, perhaps. I think he must have gone out to bury it deeper."

"And you think Miss Temple has been telling you the truth?"

"I am certain of it. I shall put it in the hands of the police—have the whole place dug up; and see that Gavin Temple is charged with murder."

"I have a plan," I said, "by which we can save ourselves the trouble of so much digging, and, at the same time, get a clearer case against the miscreant."

Ogilvie was all impatience to hear it.

"Tell Temple, this evening," I said briefly, "that you have obtained a clue, and intend having the whole south bed dug up in the morning—that you have a magistrate's order; if you do not mind the untruth. In the night we will keep watch on the garden, and, ten to one, our man will try to undo his work. We can pounce upon him in the act. Do you agree?"

Ogilvie's only objection was the delay, and I managed to persuade him that my plan would probably take up less time than the digging up of six hundred square feet of earth, to a depth of, at least, a yard.

With that settled, we took our way to Queen Anne's Gate, to recite the success of our morning's work to Mrs. Ogilvie. Frank was surprised, however, to find that his mother was not at home. She had started for St. Pancras, early in the morning, leaving only a brief message for Frank, to say that she had been summoned to her only sister's at Derby.

CHAPTER IV.

The Mystery is Cleared.

We had agreed that it would be best to give Gavin Temple the fright, by which we hoped to make him incriminate himself pretty late in the evening, in order to shorten the time during which it would be necessary for us to keep him under observation. If we told him early in the day that the garden-plot was to be searched, although it was not probable that he would attempt to remove the body before night, still the place was so secluded that there was a possibility of his making the attempt, against which we should have had to prepare. To make the warning late would, therefore, save us some hours of probably useless watching. Eight o'clock was the hour we had agreed upon, and Ogilvie was to make the announcement while I waited in the street.

The conversation lasted longer than I had expected, and it was almost nine when the young man opened the green door and beckoned me into the garden, already darkening fast with the shades of night. Our plans had all been arranged beforehand, and we crept along in silence to the southern end of the garden, taking care that we should not be observed from the house. At the south corner of the great lawn stands a little summer-house, which has a window at the back looking on the piece of ground which we were to watch.

Nothing could have suited our purpose better; and here we had agreed to remain all through the night, on the chance of Gavin Temple's coming out to undo his work of the night before.

We scarcely spoke, and only in the lowest of whispers. I was dying to smoke, but feared to do so for fear of betraying our presence before the time. I believe Ogilvie could think of nothing but the discovery which he expected to make before the night was out. He sat back on the opposite side of the open doorway, silent and motionless. The doorway opened upon the dusky lawn, and we were obliged to sit close to the wall on either side of it, for fear of being seen by anybody crossing the garden. For my own part, I found the position a most irksome and fatiguing one. I envied the composure with which poor Ogilvie remained motionless, but could not imitate it. The place seemed to swarm with creeping things.

I welcomed the coming darkness, which would render less the chances of our being observed, so that I might move a little. I was surprised at the lightness of the August night. Even at eleven the lawn, except under the yew trees, seemed almost as visible as in daylight. The hours chimed from the Westminster tower, or I should have been expecting dawn before midnight, the time seemed so long.

"Twelve o'clock," I said needlessly, as Big Ben tolled out the hour; but the slightest perceptible hiss from Ogilvie stopped me. From the house came the sound of a door opening.

After that I held my breath, listening. It seemed hours, though, before I heard another sound. It was a footstep on the gravel-path at the other side of the lawn. Then the tall, lean figure of a man came into view, crossing the grass with a spade on his shoulder. My plan had succeeded.

When we could see him no longer through the arbour doorway, we both rose, and stood watching through the little window at the back, our heads close together. Neither of us spoke a word, but I could hear Ogilvie's breath coming in drawn gasps as we saw Gavin Temple cross the garden-bed to the wall. He seemed to be measuring some length along the wall with a rod. Then there was more measuring across the bed, and then the old man began to dig.

"Shall we make our sally now? We have found the spot," said Ogilvie at last, in a whisper; but I held his arm.

"Wait!" I said, and we resumed our watching. Gavin Temple was working hard. Spadeful after spadeful of earth was thrown on the growing mound at his side. Now he had stepped into the hole which he was making, and his bent figure, still actively working, gradually sank lower and lower, showing us the depth to which he had dug. He did not stop till more than half his body was hidden; then the spadefuls of earth ceased to fly upwards, and we could see him bending down in the grave he had dug till he disappeared almost entirely. Then we saw that he was raising something with great exertion—a long oblong box, evidently.

We waited till he had lifted it to the surface, and then with one accord rushed upon him from our hiding-place.

I shall never forget the cry he gave when he caught sight of us. Down went the spade into the hole by which he was standing, and the next moment he was running towards the lawn.

My first thought was to pursue. But at the first step I stumbled on the uneven earth and fell forward.

Ogilvie helped me to rise.

"We will waste no time on him," he said. "Let us open the box."

"Here?"

"No, let us carry it home, if you are not hurt."

I assured him that my fall had done me no harm, and agreed with him that our best plan would be to carry the box to his house before attempting to open it.

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The long case seemed to be of oak, and was very heavy.

"I wonder how Temple managed to carry it alone?" I said, as we lifted it with difficulty.

"Let us hope that nobody will meet us."

"No, or we shall assuredly be arrested on suspicion of having committed a burglary."

I said it quite seriously. Of course I should not have dreamt of joking, under the circumstances. But the danger seemed to me a real one, and there was the probability of a more serious charge being preferred against us if the box were opened.

However, the distance between the two houses was so small, and the hour was so late, that, after carrying our heavy burden through the green door in the wall, we met not a single soul. Gavin Temple, as we learnt later, was so startled and terror-stricken by our sudden appearance, that he had only strength left to creep into his bed, from which he did not rise again for seven weeks.

On arriving at the house in Queen Anne's Gate, Ogilvie opened the door with his latchkey, and we carried our load into the library, where he had left a light ready.

Rushed upon him from our hiding-place.

I was thoroughly worn out with the exertion of helping to carry the oaken box even such a little distance, but my companion seemed full of energy. He hurried away to find tools for breaking the box open, while I sank into an easy chair and sat regarding it.

"Gavin Temple must have had this chest specially made for the purpose," I said, when Frank came back with screwdriver, chisel, and hammer. "I think he must have had it hidden under the earth in the garden for some days—see how the earth clings to it. My idea is that yesterday, when the body disappeared, he carried it out quickly to this chest, which was already in the earth, and covered it up temporarily. Then at night he returned, screwed on the lid carefully, as we see, and buried the box deeper."

But Ogilvie was not listening. With a strange, concentrated look on his stricken face, he had been turning up the lamp and moving the furniture of the room, so that the light should fall more clearly on his work. Then he cleared the earth from one of the screws with which the solid lid was secured. I could see that all his fingers were trembling as he did so.

Before the earth was even cleared away, however, an unexpected sound made him pause. A vehicle of some sort was stopping in front of the house.

It seemed so strange at that hour of the night, that we both listened.

"Lock the door," said Ogilvie quickly, as a latchkey was heard in the hall door. "It is my mother returning. I cannot see her now. Lock the door!"

I did as he commanded and stood there listening. Yes, it was certainly Mrs. Ogilvie's voice, speaking to someone in the hall. I suppose she had noticed the light from our window, for immediately a tap came at the locked door.

"Frank, are you there?"

The young man still knelt over the long box, the sweat standing in beads on his white face, his fingers twitching with nervous and agonised impatience to get through his task.

"For Heaven's sake, mother, leave me a little! I cannot see you just yet," he said, with a voice full of anguish. And I thought that to a woman of Mrs. Ogilvie's sympathetic nature the plea would have been sufficient; but to my surprise I heard the knob turn.

"Open the door, Frank, dear, it is more important than you think."

The thoughts flashed into my mind that she must be fearing lest her son should do himself some injury, and I hastened to make known the fact that I was in the room.

"Oh, Dr. Favel, please open the door," she said. "There is someone here who has come especially to see Frank."

Her eagerness impressed me.

"You will have to see your mother," I said, "unless I tell her."

He made no answer, so I took it into my hands to open the door and step out into the dim hall, closing the door carefully behind me. Two ladies stood there—Mrs. Ogilvie and her friend—and as I approached them, the former surprised me by hastening past me to the door, without even waiting to give me any greeting, and, turning the knob, she almost thrust her companion into the room where I had left poor Ogilvie, kneeling by the side of the box which we had brought from Pulteney Street. The old lady shut the door behind her, and turned to me.

"Excuse my rudeness, Dr. Favel," she said. "I am so excited, that I fear I hardly know what I am doing. Shall we go into the drawing room? These young people are best left alone for a little."

"But, my dear madam," I began.

The old lady interrupted me with an almost hysterical laugh.

"You are wondering who the lady can be?"

"Yes, madam."

"Can you not guess?"

I dared not make the wild guess which occurred to my mind.

The old lady laughed again.

"Yes; it is Yseult, of course. Come into the drawing-room, and I will tell you all about it."

She led the way into a handsomely furnished room, and turned up the light as she was speaking: and I, uneasy no longer, of course, about the interruption to Frank's task, prepared myself with all eagerness to hear

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Almost thrust her companion into the room.

the particulars of this remarkable and inexplicable turn of events.

The dear old lady was too excited to seat herself, and began at once.

"You did not think that I was joining in the search as well as you!" she said vivaciously. "And you little expected that I should be the successful one! However, I have little cause to thank my own ingenuity. Everything was done for me.

"This morning I received a letter from my sister in Derby. She had heard of Yseult's supposed death, and had previously, of course, seen her photograph.

"Well, at Derby there happened to be an old lady who had been a nurse to Yseult years ago. My sister knew her, and had, after the engagement, heard a good deal about Yseult. Well, yesterday Marian happened to be passing the nurse's house, and saw on the step a lady wonderfully like Yseult's photograph. Of course, if it had been anywhere else, she would not have thought so much of the likeness, but the coincidence struck her, and she luckily sent and told me all about it. I did not like to mention the matter to Frank, fearing to raise any false hopes in his heart; but considering that Yseult had disappeared, I thought I must go over and inquire into the matter. The consequence is that here I am, back with Yseult."

"But, my dear madam," I exclaimed, "what on earth was Miss Dunbar doing at Derby?"

"Ah! that I had to discover when I found her. I expected that there would be some little misunderstanding for me to clear up. It was a very trifling affair, after all. Mischief that Miss Madge had concocted."

"I have heard of that wicked woman's letter," I said. "Did poor Yseult believe her story?"

"Yes, silly girl! And when she recovered from her trance, she thought her best plan would be to disappear, and leave Frank free to marry Madge. She did not wish him to know, if he did not love her, that she was not dead. So she did not put on her own dress, but took from an old chest in the room a gown which she had worn in some private theatricals as a servant girl, and which she thought would prevent her being traced. She had some money in her desk which had not been touched, and with its help travelled to Derby, to the only friend whom, she thought, she had left—her old nurse. I found her there, and soon put matters straight."

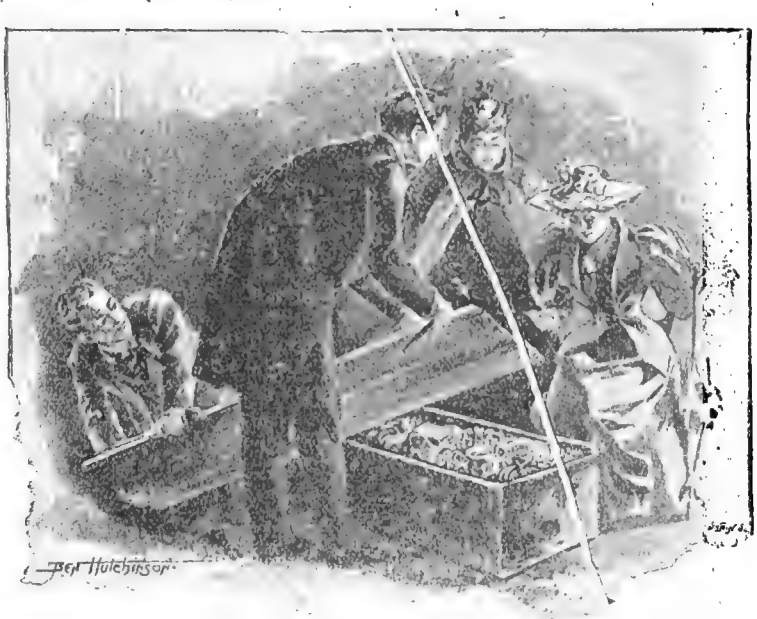
"But this is the inexplicable part," I said; and told the whole story of our doings and the finding of the box. "If it does not contain Miss Yseult's corpse, what on earth can it contain?" I wound up; and Mrs. Ogilvie laughed again. She was in the wildest of spirits at the happy ending to her son's trouble.

"Suppose we go down and see?" she suggested. "Those young people must have said all they can have to say to each other by now."

Frank and Yseult were sitting in the easy chair in the library, in a very lover-like attitude, looking as perfectly happy as two human beings very well can.

They rose as we entered, and Frank came forward to embrace and thank his mother for her part in the affair.

"We are dying to know what is in the box," said she, when she escaped from his embrace; and the young man laughed.



"It is the missing treasure!" cried Yseult.

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"I had forgotten all about the coffin," he said. "Let us open it."

It was easier said than done. The screws we found were so rusted that they could not be turned, and finally we had to break it open with the chisel and hammer. Then a surprise met our eyes, a goodly collection of jewels and gold and silver ornaments.

"Why, it is the missing treasure," cried Yseult, "which could not be found when grandpapa died!"

The missing treasure it was indeed, and lying in the midst of it a letter, which told us the story of its presence in the garden. The letter was in an envelope addressed to Yseult, with, beneath the name, the inscription:

"*To dear Yseult, on her wedding-day.*"

Luckily for our curiosity, Frank Ogilvie was too excited to pay any attention to the endorsement, but tore the envelope open, and handed the sheet which it contained to his sweetheart. Yseult read it in silence.

"It is from poor dear grandpapa!" she explained when she had finished it, seeing that we were all three devoured with curiosity. "He was always romantic. This is a plan to reward me for keeping the old garden intact. It was the last request he made to me. If I had neglected it I should have possibly lost all the family jewels and a sum of thirty thousand pounds, which he says is hidden beneath."

"Yes, here are bags of money," interjected Frank, who was leaning over the treasure-trove with the lamp in his hand.

"I suppose Gavin Temple heard all about the box from the papers in the iron box," I said, "and meant securing it?"

"No," said Yseult. "It was not to be his, the letter says if I am dead when the treasure is found, it is to go to a fund or something—which I do not quite understand."

"Which doubly explains Gavin's eagerness and secrecy," laughed Frank meaningly. "I suppose he must have either dug in the wrong place the first night, or tired himself so much that he had to give it up."

We heard later that he had dug in the wrong place from some vagueness in the old lord's directions for finding the spot—the paper speaking of the "right end" of the wall without saying from which outlook.

However, poor old Gavin's thankless labour hardly concerns us. The perfect happiness of the reunited lovers is a more pleasant consideration.

Yseult seemed damped a little when she caught sight of the envelope which had contained her letter from the dead.

"What have we done!" she exclaimed, in genuine distress. "Poor grandpapa said I was not to see this till my wedding-day, and we have read it now."

Frank Ogilvie looked at the clock on the mantelpiece, which had ticked its way merrily to the hour of three.

"The day is still young, darling," he said wickedly. "I think if we bustle round a little, we can make this the wedding-day, after all, since our banns are published already. Now I have got you back almost from the grave, I cannot bear to let you out of my sight again for a moment."

And the ardent young man's proposition was actually carried into effect.

Herbert Flowerdew.

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A copy of "The Final War" has been forwarded to each of the following six competitors: Walter Pontin, care of Mrs. Gorey, Stubbington, near Fareham, Hants; G. Guy, 5, Bath Cottages, Bath Street, Poplar, E.; F. C. Spendelon, 45, Ling Street, Holt Road, Liverpool; A. Hamley, 37, Westfield Road, Hornsey, N.W.; E. Westwood, 63, Willesden Lane, Kilburn, N.W.; J. Gibbins, 1, Greendale Road, Port Sunlight, Cheshire.

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LONGEVITY AND CORPULENCY.

We have received a copy of the just-issued eighteenth edition of Mr. F. Cecil Russell's "Corpulency and the Cure" (Woburn House, Store Street, Bedford Square, London, W.C.). This issue is in itself indicative of the widespread influence which the author now exercises as a successful expert in the treatment of obesity, while the additions to the evidence which, as a statistician, he is in the habit of collecting on the subject, are suggestive of some curious reflections. It is evident that Mr. Russell is annually treating thousands of cases of excessive fat with a success which, in the rapidity and the permanency of its manifestation, is truly marvellous. That the enormous popularity of his system is likely to increase in the future is most probable, because it is free from all the drawbacks which have rendered the Banting and other methods of reducing corpulence unacceptable to the majority of the sufferers, who have regarded these cures as rather worse than the complaint. By attacking the causes rather than the symptoms of obesity, he strengthens the digestive organs, thus actually increasing instead of decreasing the appetite; while the surplus weight is being reduced at a wonderfully rapid rate, amounting to pounds per week, and often stones per month. Add to this that there is no mystery about the nature of the absolutely innocuous preparation, the recipe for which Mr. Russell supplies in his capital little volume (256 pages), which may be obtained, post free, by sending two penny stamps to the author's offices, at the address given above. It seems certain, therefore, that, as a result of the happy revolution which the patient research of this specialist, with the aid of a distinguished physician as a collaborateur, has affected, the average of longevity will, before long, be appreciably raised. Obesity is, indeed, one of the few antagonistic influences remaining which, especially among the more prosperous classes, prevent the great majority of people of both sections becoming centenarians. With advanced ideas in regard to wholesome food, clothing, and sanitary arrangements, it only remains to get rid of clogging fat to live an ideally hygienic, and therefore, a very prolonged life.—*Belfast Evening Telegraph.*

DRINK AND CORPULENCY.

Dr. Lorenzen, the Earlangen physician, has been writing on the subject of the influence of liquors on corpulency. He made an experiment upon himself. For a space of four years he drank over two gallons daily, and for a further five years the quantity ranged from about half. In this way he succeeded in increasing his weight by five and a half stones, and he became corpulent. On discontinuing the liquids, he lost one stone in a week, and the difficulties attending respiration ceased. He endeavours to explain on the hypothesis that the cells whose province it is to decompose albumen, when a large quantity of fluid is taken, extend part of their energy in the combustion of fat. The fat they consume is replaced by fat from the tissues. All this seemed to be superfluous if intended to be of use to those who are suffering from obesity, for it simply proves that if one gives up their drink there is hope for them, but not otherwise. This is rather behind the times, for the English specialist, Mr. Russell, permits his followers to drink as much as they choose, and yet reduces them in weight as fast as the figures given by Dr. Lorenzen, which is all important. Is life worth living if one's supply of liquor is to be suddenly cut off? Mr. Russell's reduction is achieved by a clever concoction of mallows and other field herbs of the simplest nature, which has to be taken three times a day for a certain period. It is said to be extremely pleasant to the palate, tasting like a sort of lemonade, and upon the prescribed quantity as much as 4lb. in severe cases has been reduced in twenty-four hours. We have not more space to follow this interesting subject, but readers should send two stamps to Mr. Russell, Woburn House, Store Street, London, W.C., who publishes a book called "Corpulency and the Cure," which contains a pithy, sensible treatise on corpulency which should certainly be read by all who are victims to obesity.—*Kentish Gazette*, January 16th, 1897.

THE MISERY OF CORPULENCY.

A copy has come to hand of the just-issued eighteenth edition of Mr. F. Cecil Russell's "Corpulency, and the Cure" (256 pages), the clever little volume which, more than anything else, has brought about a revolution in the treatment of obesity. That the still larger circulation implied by the issue of the new edition of this popular work is necessary is proved by such a paragraph as the following. It appears among the answers to correspondents in the "Dress and Fashion" column of a Sunday newspaper, with a large circulation: "Miserable.—A young girl of eighteen ought not to be so stout that no dress looks well. Perhaps you require exercise and dieting." The helpless vagueness of this reply to a young girl who is naturally "miserable" on account of her unseemly obesity is a sufficient evidence that Mr. Russell does well in seeking to make known even more widely than they are at present, the simplicity, the efficiency, the rapidity, and the delightful surroundings of his treatment for the reduction of superabundant fat. The young girl in question, who might exercise and diet herself for months without any appreciable improvement, may easily learn to imitate the example of thousands of ladies of all ages who, by the use of Mr. Russell's pure vegetable preparation, have reduced their weight at the rate of pounds per week, and sometimes (but only when necessary, for the working of the cure is virtually automatic, stopping its effects when the normal limit is reached) stones per month. She may acquire this open secret—for the author makes no mystery about the recipe—by sending 2d. in stamps to Mr. Russell's offices, Woburn House, Store Street, Bedford Square, London, W.C., when a copy of the book will be sent post free. If she follows his instruction, "Miserable," without any fasting regimen, and without excessive exercise, will find herself being quickly reduced to shapely proportions, with an improved appetite, and full liberty to gratify it. *Teignmouth Post*, January 8th, 1897.

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Answers to Correspondents.

On page 599 will be found the first batch of sketches in a new series of Picture Puzzles. Everybody has an opportunity of obtaining a list of the names of British and Irish Peers. The best thing for you to do, is to get your children to compete. It cannot be but beneficial for them to become familiar with the names of Peers of the Realm, and you, yourself, will find the task both profitable and interesting.

H. H. B.—In proportion to their income, British people spend more upon their food than any other European nation.

G. B.—Certainly, the elephant has a nose, although it is not his trunk as you suppose. In fact, it is not easily seen, consisting of a single nostril, which extends from the air passages in the head, and has its opening in the roof of the mouth, near to the front.

D. D. B.—The largest square in London is Eaton Square. It measures 607,327 square feet. Your story is quite a good one.

P. C. P.—Rainbows are most frequently seen in the afternoon, when the sun is in the west, and the raineloud come from the west, clearing up as they go towards the east.

T. L. H.—Dartmoor is the largest tract of uncultivated land in England.

W. A. T.—The heart of the average woman beats faster than that of the average man.

A. N. W. has often been puzzled by the mysterious words "Ancient Lights" which he has often seen on old buildings.———When the windows of a house have been allowed to remain unobstructed from the light for the term of twenty years, the proprietor erects a sign of this sort, and the owner of the adjoining land then loses all legal right to build a wall, or erect a screen of any kind which would prevent the light of day from being freely transmitted through those windows.

A. L. B.—In proportion to its population, the United States of America has more theatres than any other country.

D. D.—Yes, gold has occasionally been found in Great Britain in small quantities.

R. S. T.—Although it is possible to tame a tiger if it is taken when very young, I should not advise you to try it. It is a dangerous experiment, and might cost you dear, for their temper is not to be relied upon.

H. H.—Your doctor is quite right. It is seldom that over-work kills a man, but the worry and mental strain which so often accompanies it, that proves fatal to him.

B. R. D.—You need have no fear of the population of the world becoming extinct. Even though the birth-rate is decreasing in several countries, the population generally is on the increase. Although families may be smaller now than they were of old, the members are stronger and hardier on the whole than they were.

C. A. W.—Thanks for your letter. Yes, dyspepsia is a dreadful thing. Try sipping a cup of hot water slowly, half-an-hour before each meal.

D. B. W.—No, the natives of India are not great lovers of cleanliness. The consumption of soap in India only reaches the modest amount of one ounce per head annually.

Hostess.—A room certainly does get oppressively hot during a long dinner, unless it is very well ventilated. A block of ice placed on a tray, or in a china basin, and covered with green leaves, ferns, and vines, has a charming effect, and will cool the atmosphere considerably.

Hippomenes.—To make invisible ink which is colourless, but turns yellow on being heated, dissolve sulphate of copper and sal ammoniac in equal parts of water. Cork tightly and use carefully.

G. J.—Probably the oldest wooden building in the world is a church at Borgund in Norway. It was built in the eleventh century, and has been protected by frequent coatings of pitch. It is made of pine wood.

A. B. B.—The salmon is undoubtedly the swiftest of fish. When it is necessary it can travel under the water at the rate of from twenty to twenty-five miles an hour.

A. C. B.—No, it is not true that pennies coined in the year 1864 are worth any more than a penny. The report that a bar of gold or silver had accidentally been melted with the copper in that year was entirely false, and the bronze coinage of that year has not been called in.

B. D.—I shouldn't think that you would make much profit out of silkworms, for it takes 2,800 insects to raise one pound of silk.

D. S. D. wishes to know how it is that if one has sufficient faith to grasp a nettle firmly, it does not sting. ———The stem of the nettle is covered with little hairs, each of which is terminated with a little cap containing an acrid fluid. When touched gently, the point of the hair enters the skin and injects the fluid, causing a stinging sensation. If grasped firmly, the cap is broken off lower down, and thus can do no injury.

C. C.—Far from being injurious, it is extremely beneficial to have plants in a living room, so long as they are not strong-scented.

Ivy.—The custom of calling real silver spoons, forks, etc., "plate" came from the Spanish word *plata*, meaning "silver."

R. C. M.—Perhaps the reason your beard grows so much stronger on one side than the other, is because you are in the habit of always sleeping on one side, the pressure of the pillow hindering the growth. This frequently does happen.

B. T. T.—The reason the lectern of a church is generally made in the form of an eagle is because the eagle is the natural enemy of the serpent, and as the serpent is symbolic of the enemy of the church, I think you will agree with me that the idea is most appropriate.

G. S.—Taken on the whole, Europeans have stronger, clearer, and altogether better voices, than the inhabitants of other countries. I should certainly advise you to take lessons in singing, if your voice is at all promising.

S. R.—A simple method of softening water is to expose it in the open air. The action of the atmosphere will soften it considerably.

M. B.—A pound troy of gold with alloy is divisible into a little over forty-five sovereigns. A pound troy of silver will produce sixty-six shillings.

A really interesting little medical work dealing with the digestive organs has been issued by Guy's Tonic Company. Technical language has been avoided as far as possible, and it is replete with information regarding every sort of diet. It is sent free of charge from the company in question, whose address is 12, Buckingham Palace Road, S.W.

An excellent assortment of medals in commemoration of Her Majesty's Diamond Jubilee has been sent me by Messrs. Spink and Son, of 17, Piccadilly. They are very charming to look at, and the workmanship is distinctly good.

Notice to Competitors.

In all Prize Competitions the Editor's decision is final. No correspondence will be entertained when once a competition is finished and the result published.

POSTAL RATES.

Short Stories will be sent direct from these offices, post free, to any country within the Postal Union, at the following rates, prepaid:

One Year	6s. 6d.
Half Year	3s. 3d.
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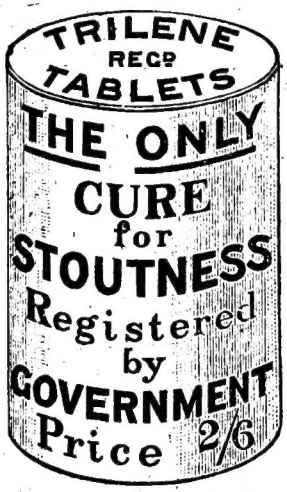
ALL FAT PEOPLE

Can be **CURED** by taking

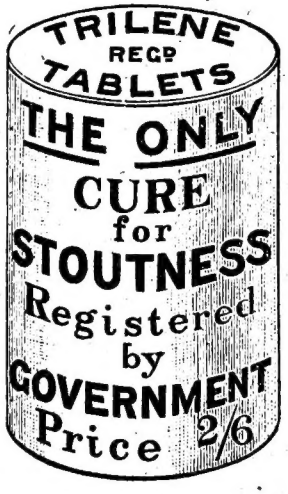
TRILENE TABLETS Regd.



For a few weeks. They will safely REDUCE WEIGHT and CURE CORPULENCY PERMANENTLY. They are small, agreeable, harmless, and never fail to improve both HEALTH and FIGURE without change of Diet.

An English Countess writes: "Your Trilene Tablets act admirably."

Send **2s. 6d.** to THE TRILENE ASSOCIATION, 66, Finsbury Pavement, London.



SAMPLES OF TESTIMONIALS.

"87, Alexandra Road, Norwich.

"GENTLEMEN,—I have had some boxes of your Tablets for my wife, and she has derived great benefit from them.

"Yours faithfully, J. R. CANHAM."

Illustrated Family Novelist, November 30th, 1895, says: "A great many women who are plump by nature worry about their stoutness. However, there are some perfectly safe remedies for embonpoint, among them being the Trilene Tablets, which are not only safe, but absolutely beneficial to the general health, and speedily produce the desired effect."

MR. TAYLOR, Church Farm, St. James, Halesworth, says: "I have lost quite 2 stone since taking your Tablets."

"6, Brighton Terrace, Hull.

"MRS. JOHNSON has much pleasure in saying she has derived great benefit from your Tablets."

"3, Castle Road, Deal.

"MRS. J. PEARSON is glad to say she is much thinner."

Convalescent Home, New Brighton, Cheshire.

MISS S. J. PRITCHARD says: "They have done me good. I am 21lb. lighter already."

"Bretton West, near Wakefield.

"MISS L. LANGFIELD has taken a box of Tablets, and is already 7lb. lighter."

MRS. HUTCHINSON, 46, Irwell Street, Widnes, Lancashire, writes: "I have taken three boxes and am reduced a stone."

A. D. BILLINGS, Bell Inn, Aldershot, writes: "Have derived great benefit already. Less in size and weight, and breathing greatly improved."

25, Windsor Terrace, Penarth, Cardiff.

MISS M. FLAVELL says: "I have lost 2 stone, and am much better in health."

Extract from *Bury and Suffolk Times*, June 15th, 1894: "Miss Atherton sings and dances as piquantly as ever, and is a marvel of agility, considering how much flesh she has put on of late. Her friends should induce her to take a course of Trilene Tablets, about which I hear wonderful things. One portly acquaintance of my own by merely a few weeks' use of these little Tablets, has reduced his bulk perceptibly. I am assured the Tablets are harmless and tasteless, and that the Trilene Company in Finsbury Pavement, London, are doing an enormous and ever-increasing trade."

MR. GILLESPIE, 50, Chancer Road, Forest Gate, Essex, says: "I have lost just 3 stone."

2, Chariot Street, Hull.

MR. JUBB, Chemist, says: "My customers speak highly of your Tablets."

Windsor Hotel, Merthyr Vale, South Wales.

MR. J. THOMAS writes: "When I started the Tablets I weighed 17½ stone, and have got down to 14st. 9lb."

West Cornforth, Ferryhill.

MR. WM. USHER says: "A sister of mine, who was 17 stone, was greatly reduced by your Tablets to 15 stone."

Aspern, 29, King's Hall Road, Beckenham.

MISS S. WOODHOUSE writes: "I have much pleasure in stating that your Tablets are really a safe cure for stoutness; they have cured me, and I am a perfect figure now."

MRS. GIBSON, of Radford Cottage, Bitterne, says: "I have derived great benefit from your Tablets, especially abdominal."

The Lady, October 8th, 1896 (giving advice to a reader who complained of stoutness), says: "The Trilene Tablets help to reduce stoutness, if taken daily; they are made of purely vegetable ingredients, and are quite harmless."

THE TRILENE ASSOCIATION, 66, FINSBURY PAVEMENT, LONDON.

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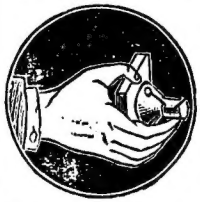
THE
DIAMOND JUBILEE AND GRAND PROCESSION.



MILLIONS OF MONEY will be spent in seats alone to witness this, the most imposing spectacle of the 19th Century, and in order that **EVERYONE** may obtain a **LASTING AND VALUABLE MEMENTO** of the grand scene, we have decided to supply a **BEAUTIFUL NICKEL-PLATED SNAPSHOT HAND CAMERA** to all persons likely to witness the procession, and to give a **VALUABLE MONEY PRIZE** for every snapshot picture of **HER MAJESTY** taken by our camera on that date.

Our Diamond Jubilee Camera is a **PERFECT LITTLE GEM**, made entirely of metal **BEAUTIFULLY PLATED**, and illustrates, one of the great scientific discoveries of this reign, for it takes **EXQUISITE PICTURES** by merely **PRESSING THE TRIGGER**, and is so small it can be carried in the pocket; yet upwards of 50 pictures can be taken of the procession and surroundings by each person, and no previous knowledge of photography is necessary to obtain a **VALUABLE PRIZE**. Each applicant for a camera **MUST INCLOSE 5/-**, for which he will receive, post free, this **MARVELLOUS GIFT**, comprising camera, dry plates, and instructions for use. Address:

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DEAFNESS CURED.

On receipt of stamped envelope, a lady who cured herself of Deafness and Noises in the Head, after fifteen years of suffering, will send to all afflicted free particulars of the Remedy, which is simple, safe, sure and inexpensive. Address—Mrs. C. E. AUSTIN, 2, Lambeth Square, London, S.E.

HAIR DESTROYED.

A lady will, on receipt of stamped envelope, send free particulars of a new French Remedy, which permanently removes all Superfluous Hairs, destroying the roots *without injuring the skin*. Simple and inexpensive. Address, Madame F. B.," c/o Fontaine et Cie., 1, Piccadilly Circus, London.

DRUNKENNESS CURED.

On receipt of stamped envelope a lady will gladly send free particulars of a simple remedy which cured her husband (without his knowledge) of the craving for Alcohol, to which he had been for twenty years a victim. Address, in confidence, Mrs. L. A. NORRIS, 7, Addington Crescent, York Road, London. S.E.

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Hands for Home Employment and Travelling; either sex. Spare Time or otherwise. The work is light and easily learned. Inclose directed envelope.

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A LOVELY COMPLEXION

Ensured and a youthful and beautiful skin free from blotch, blemish, redness, roughness, pimples, or freckles, by using

DR. MACKENZIE'S ARSENICAL SOAP,

which contains special ingredients for beautifying the skin and complexion. It is most emollient and soothing, and can be used by those with the most delicate skin even when they are unable to use any other soap. Deliciously and expensively perfumed, and guaranteed absolutely harmless.

1/- per Tablet, or 3 in box, 2/6. Unscented, 6d.

AT ALL CHEMISTS AND STORES, OR POST FREE FROM

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"Mdme. Adelina Patti finds Dr. Mackenzie's Arsenical Soap most excellent."—Craig-y-nos Castle.

Florence St. John writes from Oxford Street, W.: "I have been using Dr. Mackenzie's Arsenical Soap for three months now. It was recommended by a friend, and I was so pleased with the result that I now use no other. You are at liberty to publish this letter."

Mdlle. Jeanne Douste, Royal Carl Rosa Opera Company, writes from 4, Hornton Street, Kensington, W.: "I find it delicious, and will certainly use no other."

Ellaline Terriss writes from the Gaiety Theatre: "I have tried Dr. Mackenzie's Complexion Soap. I think it is quite one of the best I have ever used, and can thoroughly testify to its excellence."

Dorothea Irving writes from Southampton Row, W.C.: "I have used your soap already for some time, and find it most soothing and refreshing to the skin."

Cynthia Brooke writes from Adelphi Theatre, London: "I consider Dr. Mackenzie's Arsenical Toilet Soap positively the best I have ever used for the complexion."

THE MOST NUTRITIOUS COCOA

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TOO STOUT

If you require a reliable remedy for the relief of superfluous fat, send for a box of my **"H.D."** Pills. No starvation required; you may eat and drink what you like, yet I guarantee to either sex a permanent reduction of 5lb. to 7lb. weekly. They are a harmless vegetable preparation; successful in the most stubborn cases, and improve health and figure. Their action is rapid, certain, safe, tasteless, and highly recommended. Prices, 2s. 9d., 4s. 6d., and 11s., post free, plain wrapper. PROFESSOR F. T. HOLT, Argyll Chambers, West Strand, London.

HAIR DESTROYED.

An American lady who has entirely destroyed Superfluous Hair on herself will, on receipt of stamped addressed envelope, send free particulars of the Remedy to all those afflicted. Address, Mrs. C. H. McCOY, 2, Lambeth Square, London, S.E.

BLUSHING

Permanently cured. A Pamphlet giving sound practical advice and particulars of a successful treatment for a rapid, simple, and inexpensive home cure, forwarded free to all upon receipt of stamped addressed envelope.—Prof B. L. HOLT, Argyll Chambers, West Strand, London.

TOO THIN IN THE BUST.

Ladies desiring any improvement in this direction should send me stamp for free particulars of a simple, inexpensive, harmless self-treatment, whereby a *full natural bust* can be obtained. Address, in confidence, Mrs. B. K. NORRIS, 7, Addington Crescent, York Road, London, S.E.

HAIR DESTROYED.

A doctor's widow knows of a simple, inexpensive remedy that permanently destroys the roots, and will forward particulars free to all those afflicted sending stamped envelope.—Address, Mrs. B. D. WOOD, 179, Westminster Bridge Road, London.

BLUSHING.

Particulars of a self-treatment for a permanent cure, as prescribed by eminent physicians of the U.S.A., forwarded free to all sufferers on receipt of stamped addressed envelope to Dr. B. F. FIELD, 15, York Buildings, Charing Cross, London, W.

RED NOSES

Permanently cured in a few days by a simple, inexpensive self-treatment. Particulars free on receipt of stamped addressed envelope to Dr. A. M. CURTIS, York Chambers, Adelphi, London, W.C.

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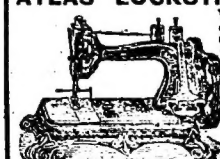

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On receipt of stamped addressed envelope a lady will send to those afflicted with Superfluous Hairs, free particulars of a simple remedy which *permanently* removed a large growth from her sister's face without injuring the skin. Address, in confidence, Miss E. R. DALE, 26, Belvedere Rd., Lambeth, London.

"DRUNKENNESS"

CURED. A Lady having cured her husband secretly of intemperate habits, will gladly send particulars of the remedy on receipt of stamped envelope.—Mrs. S. S. BARRINGTON, 4, Featherstone Bldgs., LONDON, W.C.

TOO STOUT.

A lady who in a few months reduced her weight from 16st. to 10st. 3lb. by a simple, inexpensive and harmless self-treatment, will willingly send free particulars of same to all who are sufferers, on receipt of stamped envelope. Address, Mrs. G. M. ELLIS, 26, Belvedere Road, Lambeth, London.

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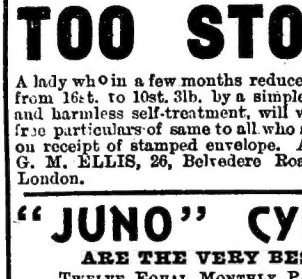
TWELVE EQUAL MONTHLY PAYMENTS.



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